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# NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY

TO THE SHORES OF THE

# POLAR SEA.

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VOL. I.

CONNECTED DISCOVERIES

# NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY

TO THE SHORES OF THE

# POLAR SEA,

IN

## THE YEARS 1819-20-21-22.

BY

JOHN FRANKLIN, Capt. R.N., F.R.S., M.W.S.,

*AND COMMANDER OF THE EXPEDITION.*

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL BATHURST.

THIRD EDITION.

TWO VOLS.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXIV.

ELPHINSTONE HIGH SCHOOL
BOMBAY

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES,
Northumberland-court.

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NATIVE EDUCATION
SOCIETY

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

# THE EARL BATHURST, K. G.,

*ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES OF STATE,*

*&c. &c. &c.*

THE FOLLOWING

# NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY TO THE NORTHERN COAST OF AMERICA,

UNDERTAKEN BY ORDER AND UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

HIS LORDSHIP,

IS BY PERMISSION, INSCRIBED

WITH GREAT RESPECT AND GRATITUDE

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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# INTRODUCTION.

His Majesty's Government having determined upon sending an Expedition from the Shores of Hudson's Bay by land, to explore the Northern Coast of America, from the Mouth of the Copper-Mine River to the eastward, I had the honour to be appointed to this service by Earl Bathurst, on the recommendation of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty; who, at the same time, nominated Doctor John Richardson, a Surgeon in the Royal Navy, Mr. George Back, and Mr. Robert Hood, two Admiralty Midshipmen, to be joined with me in the enterprize. My instructions, in substance, informed me that the main object of the Expedition was that of determining the latitudes and longitudes of the Northern

Coast of North America, and the trending of that Coast from the Mouth of the Copper-Mine River to the eastern extremity of that Continent; that it was left for me to determine according to circumstances, whether it might be most advisable to proceed, at once, directly to the northward till I arrived at the sea-coast, and thence westerly towards the Copper-Mine River; or advance, in the first instance, by the usual route to the mouth of the Copper-Mine River, and from thence easterly till I should arrive at the eastern extremity of that Continent; that, in the adoption of either of these plans, I was to be guided by the advice and information which I should receive from the wintering servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, who would be instructed by their employers to co-operate cordially in the prosecution of the objects of the Expedition, and who would provide me with the necessary escort of Indians to act as guides, interpreters, game-killers, *&c.*; and also with such articles of clothing, ammunition, snow-shoes, presents,

*&c.*, as should be deemed expedient for me to take. That as another principal object of the Expedition was to amend the very defective geography of the northern part of North America, I was to be very careful to ascertain correctly the latitude and longitude of every remarkable spot upon our route, and of all the bays, harbours, rivers, headlands, *&c.*, that might occur along the Northern Shore of North America. That in proceeding along the coast, I should erect conspicuous marks at places where ships might enter, or to which a boat could be sent; and to deposit information as to the nature of the coast for the use of Lieutenant Parry. That in the journal of our route, I should register the temperature of the air at least three times in every twenty-four hours; together with the state of the wind and weather, and any other meteorological phenomena. That I should not neglect any opportunity of observing and noting down the dip and variation of the magnetic needle, and the intensity of the magnetic force; and should take particular

notice whether any, and what kind or degree of, influence the Aurora Borealis might appear to exert on the magnetic needle; and to notice whether that phenomenon were attended with any noise; and to make any other observations that might be likely to tend to the further development of its cause, and the laws by which it is governed.

Mr. Back and Mr. Hood were to assist me in all the observations above-mentioned, and to make drawings of the land, of the natives, and of the various objects of natural history; and, particularly, of such as Dr. Richardson, who, to his professional duties, was to add that of naturalist, might consider to be most curious and interesting.

I was instructed, on my arrival at, or near, the Mouth of the Copper-Mine River, to make every inquiry as to the situation of the spot whence native copper had been brought down by the Indians to the Hudson's Bay establishment, and to visit and explore the place in question; in order that Dr. Richardson might be enabled to

make such observations as might be useful in a commercial point of view, or interesting to the science of mineralogy.

From Joseph Berens, Esq., the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the gentlemen of the Committee, I received all kinds of assistance and information, communicated in the most friendly manner previous to my leaving England; and I had the gratification of perusing the orders to their agents and servants in North America, containing the fullest directions to promote, by every means, the progress of the Expedition. I most cheerfully avail myself of this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to these Gentlemen for their personal kindness to myself and the other officers, as well as for the benefits rendered by them to the Expedition; and the same sentiment is due towards the Gentlemen of the North-West Company, both in England and America, more particularly to Simon M'Gillivray, Esq., of London, from whom I received much useful information, and cordial letters of recommendation to the partners

and agents of that Company, resident on our line of route.

A short time before I left London I had the pleasure and advantage of an interview with the late Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who was one of the two persons who had visited the coast we were to explore. He afforded me, in the most open and kind manner, much valuable information and advice.

The provisions, instruments, and other articles, of which I had furnished a list, by direction of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, were embarked on board the Hudson's Bay Company's ship Prince of Wales, appointed by the committee to convey the Expedition to York Factory, their principal establishment in Hudson's Bay.

It will be seen, in the course of the Narrative how much reason I had to be satisfied with, and how great my obligations are to, all the Gentlemen who were associated with me in the Expedition, whose kindness, good conduct, and cordial co-operation, have made an impression which can never

be effaced from my mind. The unfortunate death of Mr. Hood is the only drawback which I feel from the otherwise unalloyed pleasure of reflecting on that cordial unanimity which at all times prevailed among us in the days of sunshine, and in those of "sickness and sorrow."

To Dr. Richardson, in particular, the exclusive merit is due of whatever collections and observations have been made in the department of Natural History; and I am indebted to him in no small degree for his friendly advice and assistance in the preparation of the present narrative.

The charts and drawings were made by Lieutenant Back, and the late Lieutenant Hood. Both these gentlemen cheerfully and ably assisted me in making the observations and in the daily conduct of the Expedition. The observations made by Mr. Hood, on the various phenomena presented by the Aurora Borealis*, will, it is presumed, present to the reader some new facts connected with this meteor. Mr.

* Given in the Appendix to the Quarto Edition.

Back was mostly prevented from turning his attention to objects of science by the many severe duties which were required of him, and which obliged him to travel almost constantly every winter that we passed in America; to his personal exertions, indeed, our final safety is mainly to be attributed. And here I must be permitted to pay the tribute, due to the fidelity, exertion and uniform good conduct in the most trying situations, of John Hepburn, an English seaman, and our only attendant, to whom in the latter part of our journey we owe, under Divine Providence, the preservation of the lives of some of the party.

I ought, perhaps, to crave the reader's indulgence towards the defective style of this work, which I trust will not be refused when it is considered that mine has been a life of constant employment in my profession from a very early age. I have been prompted to venture upon the task solely by an imperious sense of duty, when called upon to undertake it.

In the ensuing Narrative the notices of

the moral condition of the Indians as influenced by the conduct of the traders towards them, refer entirely to the state in which it existed during our progress through the country; but lest I should have been mistaken respecting the views of the Hudson's Bay Company on these points, I gladly embrace the opportunity which a Second Edition affords me of stating that the junction of the two Companies has enabled the Directors to put in practice the improvements which I have reason to believe they had long contemplated. They have provided for religious instruction by the appointment of two Clergymen of the established church, under whose direction school-masters and mistresses are to be placed at such stations as afford the means of support for the establishment of schools. The offspring of the voyagers and labourers are to be educated chiefly at the expense of the Company; and such of the Indian children as their parents may wish to send to these schools, are to be instructed, clothed, and maintained at the expense of

the Church Missionary Society, which has already allotted a considerable sum for these purposes, and has also sent out teachers who are to act under the superintendence of the Rev. Mr. West, the principal chaplain of the Company.

We had the pleasure of meeting this gentleman at York Factory, and witnessed with peculiar delight the great benefit which already marked his zealous and judicious conduct. Many of the traders, and of the servants of the Company, had been induced to marry the women with whom they had cohabited; a material step towards the improvement of the females in that country.

Mr. West, under the sanction of the Directors, has also promoted a subscription for the distribution of the Bible in every part of the country where the Company's Fur Trade has extended, and which has met with very general support from the resident chief factors, traders, and clerks. The Directors of the Company are continuing to reduce the distribution of spirits gra-

dually among the Indians, as well as towards their own servants, with a view to the entire disuse of them as soon as this most desirable object can be accomplished. They have likewise issued orders for the cultivation of the ground at each of the posts, by which means the residents will be far less exposed to famine whenever through the scarcity of animals, the sickness of the Indians, or any other cause, their supply of meat may fail.

It is to be hoped that intentions, so dear to every humane and pious mind, will, through the blessing of God, meet with the utmost success.

# JOURNEY TO THE SHORES

OF

# THE POLAR SEA.

## CHAPTER I.

Departure from England — Transactions at Stromness — Enter Davis' Straits—Perilous Situation on the Shore of Resolution Island—Land on the Coast of Labrador—Esquimaux of Savage Islands—York Factory—Preparations for the Journey into the Interior.

1819. May. ON Sunday, the 23d of May, the whole of our party embarked at Gravesend on board the ship Prince of Wales, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, just as she was in the act of getting under weigh, with her consorts the Eddystone and Wear. The wind being unfavourable, on the ebb tide being finished, the vessels were again anchored; but they weighed in the night and beat down as far as the Warp, where they were detained two days by a strong easterly wind.

Having learned from some of the passengers, who were the trading Officers of the Company, that the arrival of the ships at either of the esta-

blishments in Hudson's Bay, gives full occupation to all the boatmen in their service, who are required to convey the necessary stores to the different posts in the interior; that it was very probable a sufficient number of men might not be procured from this indispensable duty; and, considering that any delay at York Factory would materially retard our future operations, I wrote to the Under Secretary of State, requesting his permission to provide a few well-qualified steersmen and bowmen, at Stromness, to assist our proceedings in the former part of our journey into the interior.

*May* 30.—The easterly wind, which had retarded the ship's progress so much, that we had only reached Hollesley Bay after a week's beating about, changed to W.S.W. soon after that anchorage had been gained. The vessels instantly weighed, and, by carrying all sail, arrived in Yarmouth Roads at seven P.M.; the pilots were landed, and our course was continued through the anchorage. At midnight, the wind became light and variable, and gradually drew round to the N.W.; and, as the sky indicated unsettled weather, and the wind blew from an unfavourable quarter for ships upon that coast, the commander bore up again for Yarmouth, and anchored at eight A.M.

This return afforded us, at least, the opportunity of comparing the longitude of Yarmouth church, as shewn by our chronometers, with its position as laid down by the Ordnance Trigonometrical Survey; and, it was satisfactory to find, from the small difference in their results, that the chronometers had not experienced any alteration in their rates, in consequence of their being changed from an horizontal position in a room, to that of being carried in the pocket.

An untoward circumstance, while at this anchorage, cast a damp on our party at this early period of the voyage. Emboldened by the decided appearance of the N.W. sky, several of our officers and passengers ventured on shore for a few hours; but, we had not been long in the town before the wind changed suddenly to S.E., which caused instant motion in the large fleet collected at this anchorage. The commander of our ship intimated his intention of proceeding to sea, by firing guns; and the passengers hastened to embark. Mr. Back, however, had unfortunately gone upon some business to a house two or three miles distant from Yarmouth, along the line of the coast; from whence he expected to be able to observe the first symptoms of moving, which the vessels might make. By some accident, however, he did not make his appearance

before the captain was obliged to make sail, that he might get the ships through the intricate passage of the Cockle Gat before it was dark. Fortunately, through the kindness of Lieutenant Hewit, of the Protector, I was enabled to convey a note to our missing companion, desiring him to proceed immediately by the coach to the Pentland Firth, and from thence across the passage to Stromness, which appeared to be the only way of proceeding by which he could rejoin the party.

*June* 3.—The wind continuing favourable after leaving Yarmouth, about nine this morning we passed the rugged and bold projecting rock, termed Johnny Groat's house, and soon afterwards Duncansby Head, and then entered the Pentland Firth. A pilot came from the main shore of Scotland, and steered the ship in safety between the different islands, to the outer anchorage at Stromness, though the atmosphere was too dense for distinguishing any of the objects on the land. Almost immediately after the ship had anchored, the wind changed to N.W., the rain ceased, and a sight was then first obtained of the neighbouring islands, and of the town of Stromness, the latter of which, from this point of view, and at this distance, presented a pleasing appearance.

Mr. Geddes, the agent of the Hudson's Bay

Company at this place, undertook to communicate my wish for volunteer boatmen to the different parishes, by a notice on the church-door, which he said was the surest and most direct channel for the conveyance of information to the lower classes in these islands, as they invariably attend divine service there every Sunday. He informed me that the kind of men we were in want of would be difficult to procure, on account of the very increased demand for boatmen for the herring fishery, which had recently been established on the shores of these islands; that last year, sixty boats and four hundred men only were employed in this service, whereas now there were three hundred boats and twelve hundred men engaged; and that owing to this unexpected addition to the fishery, he had been unable to provide the number of persons required for the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. This was unpleasant information, as it increased the apprehension of our being detained at York Factory the whole winter, if boatmen were not taken from hence. I could not therefore hesitate in requesting Mr. Geddes to engage eight or ten men well adapted for our service, on such terms as he could procure them, though the Secretary of State's permission had not yet reached me.

Next to a supply of boatmen, our attention

was directed towards the procuring of a house conveniently situated for trying the instruments, and examining the rates of the chronometers. Mr. Geddes kindly offered one of his, which, though in an unfinished state, was readily accepted, being well situated for our purpose, as it was placed on an eminence, had a southern aspect, and was at a sufficient distance from the town to secure us from frequent interruption. Another advantage was its proximity to the Manse, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Clouston, the worthy and highly respected minister of Stromness; whose kind hospitality and the polite attention of his family, the party experienced almost daily during their stay.

For three days the weather was unsettled, and few observations could be made, except for the dip of the needle, which was ascertained to be 74° 37′ 48″, on which occasion a difference of eight degrees and a half was perceived between the observations, when the face of the instrument was changed from the east to the west, the amount being the greatest when it was placed with the face to the west. But, on the 8th, a westerly wind caused a cloudless sky, which enabled us to place the transit instrument in the meridian, and to ascertain the variation of the compass, to be 27° 50′ west. The sky becoming

cloudy in the afternoon, prevented our obtaining the corresponding observations to those gained in the morning; and the next day an impervious fog obscured the sky until noon. On the evening of this day, we had the gratification of welcoming our absent companion, Mr. Back. His return to our society was hailed with sincere pleasure by every one, and removed a weight of anxiety from my mind. It appears that he had come down to the beach at Caistor, just as the ships were passing by, and had applied to some boatmen to convey him on board, which might have been soon accomplished, but they, discovering the emergency of his case, demanded an exorbitant reward which he was not at the instant prepared to satisfy; and, in consequence, they positively refused to assist him. Though he had travelled nine successive days, almost without rest, he could not be prevailed upon to withdraw from the agreeable scene of a ball-room, in which he joined us, until a late hour.

On the 10th, the rain having ceased, the observations for ascertaining the dip of the needle were repeated; and the results, compared with the former ones, gave a mean of 74° 33′ 20″. Nearly the same differences were remarked in reversing the face of the instrument as before. An attempt was also made to ascertain the mag-

netic force, but the wind blew too strong for procuring the observation to any degree of accuracy.

The fineness of the following day induced us to set up the different instruments for examination, and to try how nearly the observations made by each of them would agree; but a squall passed over just before noon, accompanied by heavy rain, and the hoped-for favourable opportunity was entirely lost. In the intervals between the observations, and at every opportunity, my companions were occupied in those pursuits to which their attention had been more particularly directed in my instructions. Whilst Dr. Richardson was collecting and examining the various specimens of marine plants, of which these islands furnish an abundant and diversified supply, Mr. Back and Mr. Hood took views and sketches of the surrounding scenery, which is extremely picturesque in many parts, and wants only the addition of trees to make it beautiful. The hills present the bold character of rugged sterility, whilst the valleys, at this season, are clothed with luxuriant verdure.

It was not till the 14th, that, by appointment, the boatmen were to assemble at the house of Mr. Geddes, to engage to accompany the Expedition. Several persons collected, but to my

great mortification, I found they were all so strongly possessed with the fearful apprehension, either that great danger would attend the service, or that we should carry them further than they would agree to go, that not a single man would engage with us; some of them, however, said they would consider the subject, and give me an answer on the following day. This indecisive conduct was extremely annoying to me, especially as the next evening was fixed for the departure of the ships.

At the appointed time on the following morning, four men only presented themselves, and these, after much hesitation, engaged to accompany the Expedition to Fort Chipewyan, if they should be required so far. The bowmen and steersmen were to receive forty pounds' wages annually, and the middle men thirty-five pounds. They stipulated to be sent back to the Orkney Islands, free of expense, and to receive their pay until the time of arrival. Only these few men could be procured, although our requisition had been sent to almost every island, even as far as the northernmost point of Ronaldsha. I was much amused with the extreme caution these men used before they would sign the agreement; they minutely scanned all our intentions, weighed every circumstance, looked narrowly into the

plan of our route, and still more circumspectly to the prospect of return. Such caution on the part of the northern mariners forms a singular contrast with the ready and thoughtless manner in which an English seaman enters upon any enterprise, however hazardous, without inquiring, or desiring to know where he is going, or what he is going about.

The brig Harmony, belonging to the Moravian Missionary Society, and bound to their settlement at Nain, on the coast of Labrador, was lying at anchor. With the view of collecting some Esquimaux words and sentences, or gaining any information respecting the manners and habits of that people, Doctor Richardson and myself paid her a visit. We found the passengers, who were going out as Missionaries, extremely disposed to communicate; but as they only spoke the German and Esquimaux languages, of which we were ignorant, our conversation was necessarily much confined: by the aid, however, of an Esquimaux and German Dictionary, some few words were collected, which we considered might be useful. There were on board a very interesting girl, and a young man, who were natives of Disco, in Old Greenland; both of them had fair complexions, rather handsome features, and a lively manner; the former was going to be married to

a resident Missionary, and the latter to officiate in that character. The commander of the vessel gave me a translation of the Gospel of St. John in the Esquimaux language, printed by the Moravian Society in London.

*June* 16.—The wind being unfavourable for sailing I went on shore with Dr. Richardson, and took several lunar observations at the place of our former residence. The result obtained was latitude 58° 56′ 56″, N.; longitude 3° 17′ 55″ W.; variation 27° 50′ W.; dip of the magnetic needle, 74° 33′ 20″. In the afternoon the wind changed in a squall some points towards the north, and the Prince of Wales made the preparatory signal for sea. At three P.M. the ships weighed, an hour too early for the tide; as soon as this served we entered into the passage between Hoy and Pomona, and had to beat through against a very heavy swell, which the meeting of a weather tide and a strong breeze had occasioned.

Some dangerous rocks lie near the Pomona shore, and on this side also the tide appeared to run with the greatest strength. On clearing the outward projecting points of Hoy and Pomona, we entered at once into the Atlantic, and commenced our voyage to Hudson's Bay—having the Eddystone, Wear, and Harmony, Missionary brig, in company.

The comparisons of the chronometers this day indicated that Arnold's Nos. 2148 and 2147, had slightly changed their rates since they had been brought on board; fortunately the rate of the former seems to have increased nearly in the same ratio as the other has lost, and the mean longitude will not be materially affected.

Being now fairly launched into the Atlantic, I issued a general memorandum for the guidance of the officers during the prosecution of the service on which we were engaged, and communicated to them the several points of information that were expected from us by my instructions. I also furnished them with copies of the signals which had been agreed upon between Lieutenant Parry and myself, to be used in the event of our reaching the northern coast of America, and falling in with each other.

At the end of the month of June, our progress was found to have been extremely slow, owing to a determined N.W. wind and much sea. We had numerous birds hovering round the ship; principally fulmars (*procellaria glacialis,*) and shearwaters, (*procellaria puffinus,*) and not unfrequently saw shoals of grampusses sporting about, which the Greenland seamen term finners from their large dorsal fin. Some porpoises occasionally appeared, and whenever they did, the crew were

sanguine in their expectation of having a speedy change in the wind, which had been so vexatiously contrary, but they were disappointed in every instance.

*Thursday, July* 1.—The month of July set in more favourably; and, aided by fresh breezes, we advanced rapidly to the westward, attended daily by numerous fulmars and shearwaters. The Missionary brig had parted company on the 22d of June. We passed directly over that part of the ocean where the "Sunken Land of Buss" is laid down in the old, and continued in the Admiralty charts. Mr. Bell, the commander of the Eddystone, informed me, that the pilot who brought his ship down the Thames told him that he had gained soundings in twelve feet somewhere hereabout; and I am rather inclined to attribute the very unusual and cross sea we had in this neighbourhood to the existence of a bank, than to the effect of a gale of wind which we had just before experienced; and I cannot but regret that the commander of the ship did not try for soundings at frequent intervals.

By the 25th July we had opened the entrance of Davis' Straits, and in the afternoon spoke the Andrew Marvell, bound to England with a cargo of fourteen fish. The master informed us that the ice had been heavier this season in Davis'

Straits than he had ever recollected, and that it lay particularly close to the westward, being connected with the shore to the northward of Resolution Island, and extending from thence within a short distance of the Greenland coast; that whales had been abundant, but the ice so extremely cross, that few could be killed. His ship, as well as several others, had suffered material injury, and two vessels had been entirely crushed between vast masses of ice in latitude 74° 40′ N., but the crews were saved. We inquired anxiously, but in vain, for intelligence respecting Lieutenant Parry, and the ships under his command; but as he mentioned that the wind had been blowing strong from the northward for some time, which would, probably, have cleared Baffin's Bay of ice, we were disposed to hope favourably of his progress.

The clouds assumed so much the appearance of icebergs this evening, as to deceive most of the passengers and crew; but their imaginations had been excited by the intelligence we had received from the Andrew Marvell, that she had only parted from a cluster of them two days previous to our meeting.

On the 27th, being in latitude 57° 44′ 21″ N., longitude 47° 31′ 14″ W., and the weather calm we tried for soundings, but did not reach the

bottom. The register thermometer was attached to the line just above the lead, and is supposed to have descended six hundred and fifty fathoms. A well-corked bottle was also fastened to the line, two hundred fathoms above the lead, and went down four hundred and fifty fathoms. The change in temperature, shewn by the register thermometer during the descent, was from 52° to 40.5; and it stood at the latter point, when taken out of the tin case. The temperature of the water brought up in the bottle was 41°, being half a degree higher at four hundred and fifty than at six hundred and fifty fathoms, and four degrees colder than the water at the surface, which was then at 45°, whilst that of the air was 46°. This experiment in shewing the water to be colder at a great depth than at the surface, and in proportion to the increase of the descent, coincides with the observations of Captain Ross and Lieutenant Parry, on their late voyage to these seas, but is contrary to the results obtained by Captain Buchan and myself, on our recent voyage to the north, between Spitzbergen and Greenland, in which sea we invariably found the water brought from any great depth to be warmer than that at the surface.

On the 28th we tacked, to avoid an extensive stream of sailing ice. The temperature of the

water fell to 39,5°, when we were near it, but was at 41°, when at the distance of half a mile. The thermometer in the air remained steadily at 40°. Thus the proximity of this ice was not so decidedly indicated by the decrease of the temperature of either the air or water, as I have before witnessed, which was probably owing to the recent arrival of the stream at this point, and its passing at too quick a rate for the effectual diffusion of its chilling influence beyond a short distance. Still the decrease in both cases was sufficient to have given timely warning for a ship's performing any evolution that would have prevented the coming in contact with it, had the thickness of the weather precluded a distant view of the danger.

The approach to ice would be more evidently pointed out in the Atlantic, or wherever the surface is not so continually chilled by the passing and the melting of ice as in this sea; and I should strongly recommend a strict hourly attention to the thermometrical state of the water at the surface, in all parts where ships are exposed to the dangerous concussion of sailing icebergs, as a principal means of security.

The following day our ship came near another stream of ice, and the approach to it was indicated by a decrease of the temperature of the

water at the surface from 44° to 42°. A small pine-tree was picked up much shattered by the ice. In the afternoon of the 30th, a very dense fog came on; and, about six P.M., when sailing before a fresh breeze, we were suddenly involved in a heavy stream of ice. Considerable difficulty was experienced in steering through the narrow channels between the different masses in this foggy weather, and the ship received several severe blows.

The water, as usual in the centre of the stream, was quite smooth, but we heard the waves beating violently against the outer edge of the ice. There was some earthy matter on several of the pieces, and the whole body bore the appearance of recent separation from the land. In the space of two hours we again got into the open sea, but had left our two consorts far behind; they followed our track by the guns we discharged. The temperature of the surface water was 35° when amongst the ice, 38° when just clear of it, and 41.5° at two miles distant.

On the 4th of August, when in latitude 59° 58′ N., longitude 59° 53′ W., we first fell in with large icebergs; and in the evening were encompassed by several of considerable magnitude, which obliged us to tack the ship in order to prevent our getting entangled amongst them.

The estimated distance from the nearest part of the Labrador coast was then eighty-eight miles; here we tried for soundings, without gaining the bottom. The ship passed through some strong riplings, which evidently indicated a current, but its direction was not ascertained. We found, however, by the recent observations, that the ship had been set daily to the southward, since we had opened Davis' Straits. The variation of the compass was observed to be 52° 41′ W.

At nine P.M., brilliant coruscations of the Aurora Borealis appeared, of a pale ochre colour, with a slight tinge of red, in an arched form, crossing the zenith from N.W. to S.E., but afterwards they assumed various shapes, and had a rapid motion.

On the 5th of August, a party of the officers endeavoured to get on one of the larger icebergs, but ineffectually, owing to the steepness and smoothness of its sides, and the swell produced by its undulating motion. This was one of the largest we saw, and Mr. Hood ascertained its height to be one hundred and forty-nine feet; but these masses of ice are frequently magnified to an immense size, through the illusive medium of a hazy atmosphere, and on this account their dimensions have often been exaggerated by voyagers.

In the morning of the 7th, the Island of Resolution was indistinctly seen through the haze, but was soon afterwards entirely hidden by a very dense fog. The favourable breeze subsided into a perfect calm, and left the ship surrounded by loose ice. At this time the Eddystone was perceived to be driving with rapidity towards some of the larger masses; the stern-boats of this ship and of the Wear were despatched to assist in towing her clear of them. At ten, a momentary clearness presented the land distinctly at the distance of two miles; the ship was quite unmanageable, and under the sole governance of the currents, which ran in strong eddies between the masses of ice. Our consorts were also seen, the Wear being within hail, and the Eddystone at a short distance from us. Two attempts were ineffectually made to gain soundings, and the extreme density of the fog precluded us from any other means of ascertaining the direction in which we were driving until half past twelve, when we had the alarming view of a barren rugged shore within a few yards, towering over the mast heads. Almost instantly afterwards the ship struck violently on a point of rocks, projecting from the island; and the ship's side was brought so near to the shore, that poles were prepared to push her off. This blow displaced the rudder, and

raised it several inches, but it fortunately had been previously confined by tackles. A gentle swell freed the ship from this perilous situation, but the current hurried us along in contact with the rocky shore, and the prospect was most alarming. On the outward bow was perceived a rugged and precipitous cliff, whose summit was hid in the fog, and the Vessel's head was pointed towards the bottom of a small bay, into which we were rapidly driving. There now seemed to be no probability of escaping shipwreck, being without wind, and having the rudder in its present useless state; the only assistance was that of a boat employed in towing, which had been placed in the water between the ship and the shore, at the imminent risk of its being crushed. The ship again struck in passing over a ledge of rocks, and happily the blow replaced the rudder, which enabled us to take advantage of a light breeze, and to direct the ship's head without the projecting cliff. But the breeze was only momentary, and the ship was a third time driven on shore on the rocky termination of the cliff. Here we remained stationary for some seconds, and with little prospect of being removed from this perilous situation; but we were once more extricated by the swell from this ledge also, and carried still farther along the shore. The coast became

now more rugged, and our view of it was terminated by another high projecting point on the starboard bow. Happily, before we had reached it, a light breeze enabled us to turn the ship's head to seaward, and we had the gratification to find, when the sails were trimmed, that she drew off the shore. We had made but little progress, however, when she was violently forced by the current against a large iceberg lying aground.

Our prospect was now more alarming than at any preceding period; and it would be difficult for me to portray the anxiety and dismay depicted on the countenances of the female passengers and children, who were rushing on deck in spite of the endeavours of the officers to keep them below, out of the danger which was apprehended if the masts should be carried away. After the first concussion, the ship was driven along the steep and rugged side of this iceberg with such amazing rapidity, that the destruction of the masts seemed inevitable, and every one expected we should again be forced on the rocks in the most disabled state; but we providentially escaped this perilous result, which must have been decisive.

The dense fog now cleared away for a short time, and we discovered the Eddystone close to

some rocks, having three boats employed in towing; but the Wear was not visible.

Our ship received water very fast; the pumps were instantly manned and kept in continual use, and signals of distress were made to the Eddystone, whose commander promptly came on board, and then ordered to our assistance his carpenter and all the men he could spare, together with the carpenter and boat's crew of the Wear, who had gone on board the Eddystone in the morning, and were prevented from returning to their own vessel by the fog. As the wind was increasing, and the sky appeared very unsettled, it was determined the Eddystone should take the ship in tow, that the undivided attention of the passengers and crew might be directed to pumping, and clearing the holds to examine whether there was a possibility of stopping the leak. We soon had reason to suppose the principal injury had been received from a blow near the stern-post, and, after cutting away part of the ceiling, the carpenters endeavoured to stop the rushing in of the water, by forcing oakum between the timbers; but this had not the desired effect, and the leak, in spite of all our efforts at the pumps, increased so much, that parties of the officers and passengers were stationed to bail

out the water in buckets at different parts of the hold. A heavy gale came on, blowing from the land, as the night advanced; the sails were split, the ship was encompassed by heavy ice, and, in forcing through a closely-connected stream, the tow-rope broke, and obliged us to take a portion of the seamen from the pumps, and appoint them to the management of the ship.

Fatigue, indeed, had caused us to relax in our exertions at the pumps during a part of the night of the 8th, and on the following morning upwards of five feet water was found in the well. Renewed exertions were now put forth by every person, and before eight A.M. the water was so much reduced as to enable the carpenters to get at other defective places; but the remedies they could apply were insufficient to repress the water from rushing in, and our labours could but just keep the ship in the same state throughout the day, until six P.M.; when the strength of every one began to fail, the expedient of thrusting in felt, as well as oakum, was resorted to, and a plank nailed over all. After this operation a perceptible diminution in the water was made, and being encouraged by the change, we put forth our utmost exertion in bailing and pumping; and before night, to our infinite joy, the leak was so overpowered that

the pumps were only required to be used at intervals of ten minutes. A sail, covered with every substance that could be carried into the leaks by the pressure of the water, was drawn under the quarter of the ship, and secured by ropes on each side.

As a matter of precaution in the event of having to abandon the ship, which was for some time doubtful, the elderly women and children were removed to the Eddystone when the wind was moderate this afternoon, but the young women remained to assist at the pumps, and their services were highly valuable, both for their personal labour, and for the encouragement their example and perseverance gave to the men.

At day-light, on the 9th, every eye was anxiously cast around the horizon in search of the Wear, but in vain; and the recollection of our own recent peril caused us to entertain considerable apprehensions for her safety. This anxiety quickened our efforts to exchange our shattered sails for new ones, that the ship might be got, as speedily as possible, near to the land, which was but just in sight, and a careful search be made for her along the coast. We were rejoiced to find that our leak did not increase by carrying sail, and we ventured in the evening to remove the sail which had been placed under the part

where the injury had been received, as it greatly impeded our advance.

We passed many icebergs on the 10th, and in the evening we tacked from a level field of ice, which extended northward as far as the eye could reach. Our leak remained in the same state; the pumps discharged in three minutes the quantity of water which had been received in fifteen.

The ship could not be got near to the land before the afternoon of the 11th. At four P.M. we hove to, opposite to, and about five miles distant from, the spot on which we had first struck on Saturday. Every glass was directed along the shore (as they had been throughout the day,) to discover any trace of our absent consort; but, as none was seen, our solicitude respecting her was much increased, and we feared the crew might be wrecked on this inhospitable shore. Guns were frequently fired to apprize any who might be near of our approach; but, as no one appeared, and no signal was returned, and the loose ice was setting down towards the ship, we bore up to proceed to the next appointed rendezvous. At eight P.M. we were abreast of the S.W. end of the island called Cape Resolution, which is a low point, but indicated at a distance by a lofty round backed hill that rises above it. We entered Hudson's Straits soon afterwards.

The coast of Resolution Island should be approached with caution, as the tides appear to be strong and uncertain in their course. Some dangerous rocks lie above and below the water's edge, at the distance of five or six miles from East Bluff, bearing S. 32° E.

*August* 12.—Having had a fresh gale through the night, we reached Saddleback Island by noon —the place of rendezvous; and looked anxiously, but in vain, for the Wear. Several guns were fired, supposing she might be hid from our view by the land; but, as she did not appear, Captain Davidson, having remained two hours, deemed further delay inexpedient, and bore up to keep the advantage of the fair wind. The outline of this island is rugged; the hummock on its northern extremity appeared to me to resemble a decayed martello tower more than a saddle.

Azimuths were obtained this evening that gave the variation 58 °45′ W., which is greater than is laid down in the charts, or than the officers of the Hudson's Bay ships have been accustomed to allow. We arrived abreast of the Upper Savage Island early in the morning, and as the breeze was moderate, the ship was steered as near to the shore as the wind would permit, to give the Esquimaux inhabitants an opportunity of coming off to barter, which they soon embraced.

Their shouts at a distance intimated their approach sometime before we descried the canoes paddling towards us; the headmost of them reached us at eleven; these were quickly followed by others, and before noon about forty canoes, each holding one man, were assembled around the two ships. In the afternoon, when we approached nearer to the shore, five or six larger ones, containing the women and children, came up.

The Esquimaux immediately evinced their desire to barter, and displayed no small cunning in making their bargains, taking care not to exhibit too many articles at first. Their principal commodities were, oil, sea-horse teeth, whalebone, seal-skin dresses, caps and boots, deer-skins and horns, and models of their canoes; and they received in exchange small saws, knives, nails, tin-kettles, and needles. It was pleasing to behold the exultation, and to hear the shouts of the whole party, when an acquisition was made by any one; and not a little ludicrous to behold the eagerness with which the fortunate person licked each article with his tongue, on receiving it, as a finish to the bargain, and an act of appropriation. They in no instance omitted this strange practice, however small the article; the needles even passed individually through the

ceremony. The women brought imitations of men, women, animals, and birds, carved with labour and ingenuity out of sea-horse teeth. The dresses and the figures of the animals, were not badly executed, but there was no attempt at the delineation of the countenances; and most of the figures were without eyes, ears, and fingers, the execution of which would, perhaps, have required more delicate instruments than they possess. The men set most value on saws; *kuttee-swa-bak*, the name by which they distinguish them, was a constant cry. Knives were held next in estimation. An old sword was bartered from the Eddystone, and I shall long remember the universal burst of joy on the happy man's receiving it. It was delightful to witness the general interest excited by individual acquisitions. There was no desire shewn by any one to over-reach his neighbour, or to press towards any part of the ship were a bargain was making, until the person in possession of the place had completed his exchange and removed; and, if any article happened to be demanded from the outer canoes, the men nearest assisted willingly in passing the thing across. Supposing the party to belong to one tribe, the total number of the tribe must exceed two hundred persons, as there were, probably, one hundred and fifty around the

ships, and few of these were elderly persons, or male children.

Their faces were broad and flat, the eyes small. The men were in general stout. Some of the younger women and the children had rather pleasing countenances, but the difference between these and the more aged of that sex, bore strong testimony to the effects which a few years produce in this ungenial climate. Most of the party had sore eyes, all of them appeared of a plethoric habit of body; several were observed bleeding at the nose during their stay near the ship. The men's dresses consisted of a jacket of seal-skin, the trowsers of bear-skin, and several had caps of the white fox-skin. The female dresses were made of the same materials, but differently shaped, having a hood in which the infants were carried. We thought their manner very lively and agreeable. They were fond of mimicking our speech and gestures; but nothing afforded them greater amusement than when we attempted to retaliate by pronouncing any of their words.

The canoes were of seal-skin, and similar in every respect to those used by the Esquimaux in Greenland; they were generally new and very complete in their appointments. Those appropriated to the women are of ruder construction, and only calculated for fine weather; they are,

however, useful vessels, being capable of containing twenty persons with their luggage. An elderly man officiates as steersman, and the women paddle, but they have also a mast which carries a sail, made of dressed whale-gut.

When the women had disposed of all their articles of trade they resorted to entreaty; and the putting in practice many enticing gestures was managed with so much address, as to procure them presents of a variety of beads, needles, and other articles in great demand among females.

It is probable these Esquimaux go from this shore to some part of Labrador to pass the winter, as parties of them have been frequently seen by the homeward-bound Hudson's Bay ships in the act of crossing the Strait.

They appear to speak the same language as the tribe of Esquimaux, who reside near to the Moravian settlements in Labrador: for we perceived they used several of the words which had been given to us by the Missionaries at Stromness.

Towards evening, the Captain, being desirous to get rid of his visitors, took an effectual method by tacking from the shore; our friends then departed apparently in high glee at the harvest they had reaped. They paddled away very swiftly, and would, doubtless, soon reach the shore though it was distant ten or twelve miles.

Not having encountered any of the ice, which usually arrests the progress of ships in their outward passage through the Straits, and being consequently deprived of the usual means of replenishing our stock of water, which had become short, the Captain resolved on going to the coast of Labrador for a supply. Dr. Richardson and I gladly embraced this opportunity to land, and examine this part of the coast. I was also desirous to observe the variation on shore, as the azimuths, which had been taken on board both ships since our entrance into the Straits, had shewn a greater amount than we had been led to expect; but, unluckily the sun became obscured. The beach consisted of large rolled stones of gneiss and sienite, amongst which many pieces of ice had grounded, and it was with difficulty that we effected a landing in a small cove under a steep cliff. These stones were worn perfectly smooth; neither in the interstices, nor at the bottom of the water, which was very clear, were there any vestiges of sea-weed.

The cliff was from forty to fifty feet high and quite perpendicular, and had at its base a small slip of soil formed of the debris of a bed of clay-slate. From this narrow spot Dr. Richardson collected specimens of thirty different species of plants; and we were about to scramble up a

shelving part of the rock, and go into the interior, when we perceived the signal of recall, which the master had caused to be made, in consequence of a sudden change in the appearance of the weather.

On the evening of the 19th, we passed Digge's Islands, the termination of Hudson's Strait. Here the Eddystone parted company, being bound to Moose Factory at the bottom of the Bay. A strong north wind came on, which prevented our getting round the north end of Mansfield; and, as it continued to blow with equal strength for the next five days, we were most vexatiously detained in beating along the Labrador coast, and near the dangerous chain of islands, the Sleepers, which are said to extend from the latitude of 60° 10′ to 57° 00′ N. The press of sail, which of necessity we carried caused the leak to increase and the pumps were kept in constant use.

A favouring wind at length enabled us, on the 25th, to shape our course across Hudson's Bay. Nothing worthy of remark occurred during this passage, except the rapid decrease in the variation of the magnetic needle. The few remarks respecting the appearance of the land, which we were able to make in our quick passage through these Straits, were transmitted to the Admiralty; but as they will not be interesting to the general reader, and may not be suf-

ficiently accurate for the guidance of the Navigator, they are omitted in this narrative.

On the 28th we discovered the land to the southward of Cape Tatnam, which is so extremely low, that the tops of the trees were first discerned; the soundings at the time were seventeen fathoms, which gradually decreased to five as the shore was approached. Cape Tatnam is not otherwise remarkable than as being the point from which the coast inclines rather more to the westward towards York Factory.

The opening of the morning of the 30th presented to our view the anchorage at York Flats, and the gratifying sight of a vessel at anchor, which we recognised, after an anxious examination, to be the Wear. A strong breeze blowing from the direction of the Flats, caused the water to be more shallow than usual on the sandy bar, which lies on the seaward side of the anchorage, and we could not get over it before two P.M., when the tide was nearly at its height.

Immediately after our arrival, Mr. Williams, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's posts, come on board, accompanied by the Commander of the Wear. The pleasure we felt in welcoming the latter gentleman can easily be imagined, when it is considered what reason we had to apprehend that he and his crew had

been numbered with the dead. We learned that one of the larger masses of ice had providentially drifted between the vessel's side and the rocks just at the time he expected to strike, to which he secured it until a breeze sprang up, and enabled him to pursue his voyage.

The Governor acquainted me that he had received information from the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company of the equipment of the Expedition, and that the officers would come out in their first ship. In the evening Dr. Richardson, Mr. Hood, and I, accompanied him to York Factory, which we reached after dark; it is distant from the Flats seven miles. Early next morning the honour of a salute was conferred on the members of the Expedition.

Having communicated to the Governor the objects of the Expedition, and that I had been directed to consult with him and the senior servants of the Company as to the best mode of proceeding towards the execution of the service, I was gratified by his assurance that his instructions from the Committee directed that every possible assistance should be given to forward our progress, and that he should feel peculiar pleasure in performing this part of his duty. He introduced me at once to Messrs. Charles, Swaine, and Snodie, masters of dis-

tricts, who, from long residence in the country, were perfectly acquainted with the different modes of travelling, and the obstructions which might be anticipated. At the desire of these gentlemen, I drew up a series of questions respecting the points on which we required information; to which, two days afterwards they had the kindness to return very explicit and satisfactory answers; and on receiving them I requested the Governor to favour me with his sentiments on the same subject in writing, which he delivered to me on the following day.

Having learned that Messrs. Shaw, M'Tavish, and several other partners of the N.W. Company, were under detention at this place, we took the earliest opportunity of visiting them; when having presented the general circular, and other introductory letters, with which I had been furnished by their agent Mr. Simon M'Gillivray, we received from them the most friendly and full assurance of the cordial endeavours of the wintering partners of their company to promote the interests of the Expedition. The knowledge we had now gained of the state of the violent commercial opposition existing in the country, rendered this assurance highly gratifying; and these gentlemen added to the obligation by freely communicating that information respecting

the interior of the country, which their intelligence and long residence so fully qualified them to give.

I deemed it expedient to issue a memorandum to the officers of the Expedition, strictly prohibiting any interference whatever in the existing quarrels, or any that might arise, between the two Companies; and on presenting it to the principals of both the parties, they expressed their satisfaction at the step I had taken.

The opinions of all the gentlemen were so decidedly in favour of the route by Cumberland House, and through the chain of posts to the Great Slave Lake, that I determined on pursuing it, and immediately communicated my intention to the Governor, with a request that he would furnish me with the means of conveyance for the party as speedily as possible.

It was suggested in my instructions that we might probably procure a schooner at this place, to proceed north as far as Wager Bay; but the vessel alluded to was lying at Moose Factory, completely out of repair; independently of which, the route directly to the northward was rendered impracticable by the impossibility of procuring hunters and guides on the coast.

I found that as the Esquimaux inhabitants had left Churchill a month previous to our arrival, no

interpreter from that quarter could be procured before their return in the following spring. The Governor, however, undertook to forward to us, next season, the only one amongst them who understood English, if he could be induced to go.

The governor selected one of the largest of the Company's boats for our use on the journey, and directed the carpenters to commence refitting it immediately; but he was only able to furnish us with a steersman; and we were obliged to make up the rest of the crew with the boatmen brought from Stromness, and our two attendants.

York Factory, the principal depôt of the Hudson's Bay Company, stands on the west bank of Hayes' River, about five miles above its mouth, on the marshy peninsula which separates the Hayes and Nelson Rivers. The surrounding country is flat and swampy, and covered with willows, poplars, larch, spruce, and birch-trees; but the requisition for fuel has expended all the wood in the vicinity of the fort, and the residents have now to send for it to a considerable distance. The soil is alluvial clay, and contains imbedded rolled stones. Though the bank of the river is elevated about twenty feet, it is frequently overflown by the spring-floods, and large portions are annually carried away by the disruption of the ice, which grounding in the stream, have formed

several muddy islands. These interruptions, together with the various collection of stones that are hid at high water, render the navigation of the river difficult; but vessels of two hundred tons burthen may be brought through the proper channels as high as the Factory.

The principal buildings are placed in the form of a square, having an octagonal court in the centre; they are two stories in height, and have flat roofs covered with lead. The officers dwell in one portion of this square, and in the other parts the articles of merchandise are kept: the workshops, storehouses for the furs, and the servants' houses are ranged on the outside of the square, and the whole is surrounded by a stockade twenty feet high. A platform is laid from the house to the pier on the bank for the convenience of transporting the stores and furs, which is the only promenade the residents have on this marshy spot during the summer season. The few Indians who now frequent this establishment, belong to the *Swampy Crees*. There were several of them encamped on the outside of the stockade. Their tents were rudely constructed by tying twenty or thirty poles together at the top, and spreading them out at the base so as to form a cone; these were covered with dressed moose-skins. The fire is placed in the centre, and a

hole is left for the escape of the smoke. The inmates had a squalid look, and were suffering under the combined afflictions of hooping-cough and measles; but even these miseries did not keep them from an excessive indulgence in spirits, which they unhappily can procure from the traders with too much facility; and they nightly serenaded us with their monotonous drunken songs. Their sickness at this time, was particularly felt by the traders, this being the season of the year when the exertion of every hunter is required to procure their winter's stock of geese, which resort in immense flocks to the extensive flats in this neighbourhood. These birds, during the summer, retire far to the north, and breed in security; but, when the approach of winter compels them to seek a more southern climate, they generally alight on the marshes of this bay, and fatten there for three weeks or a month, before they take their final departure from the country. They also make a short halt at the same spots in their progress northwards in the spring. Their arrival is welcomed with joy, and the *goose hunt* is one of the most plentiful seasons of the year. The ducks frequent the swamps all the summer.

The weather was extremely unfavourable for celestial observations during our stay, and it was

only by watching the momentary appearances of the sun, that we were enabled to obtain fresh rates for the chronometers, and allow for their errors from Greenwich time. The dip of the needle was observed to be 79° 29′ 07″, and the difference produced by reversing the face of the instrument was 11° 3′ 40″. A succession of fresh breezes prevented our ascertaining the intensity of the magnetic force. The position of York Factory, by our observations, is in latitude 57° 00′ 03″ N., longitude 92° 26′ W. The variation of the compass 6° 00′ 21″ E.

## CHAPTER II.

Passage up Hayes', Steel, and Hill Rivers—Cross Swampy Lake—Jack River—Knee Lake and Magnetic Islet—Trout River—Holy Lake—Weepinapaunis River—Windy Lake—White-Fall Lake and River—Echemamis and Sea Rivers—Play-Green Lakes—Lake Winipeg—River Saskatchawan—Cross, Cedar, and Pine-Island Lakes—Cumberland House.

1819. September. On the 9th of September, our boat being completed, arrangements were made for our departure as soon as the tide should serve. But, when the stores were brought down to the beach, it was found that the boat would not contain them all. The whole, therefore, of the bacon, and part of the flour, rice, tobacco, and ammunition, were returned into the store. The bacon was too bulky an article to be forwarded under any circumstances; but the Governor undertook to forward the rest next season. In making the selection of articles to carry with us, I was guided by the judgment of Governor Williams, who assured me that tobacco, ammunition, and spirits, could be procured in the interior, otherwise I should have been very unwilling to have left

these essential articles behind. We embarked at noon, and were honoured with a salute of eight guns and three cheers from the Governor and all the inmates of the fort, who had assembled to witness our departure. We gratefully returned their cheers, and then made sail, much delighted at having now commenced our voyage into the interior of America. The wind and tide failing us at the distance of six miles above the Factory, and the current being too rapid for using oars to advantage, the crew had to commence tracking, or dragging the boat by a line, to which they were harnessed. This operation is extremely laborious in these rivers. Our men were obliged to walk along the steep declivity of a high bank, rendered at this season soft and slippery by frequent rains, and their progress was often further impeded by fallen trees, which, having slipped from the verge of the thick wood above, hung on the face of the bank in a great variety of directions. Notwithstanding these obstacles, we advanced at the rate of two miles an hour, one-half of the crew relieving the other at intervals of an hour and a half. The banks of the river, and its islands, composed of alluvial soil, are well covered with pines, larches, poplars, and willows. The breadth of the stream, some distance above the Factory, is about half a mile,

and its depth, during this day's voyage, varied from three to nine feet.

At sunset we landed, and pitched the tent for the night, having made a progress of twelve miles. A large fire was quickly kindled, supper speedily prepared, and as readily despatched, when we retired with our buffalo robes on, and enjoyed a night of sound repose.

It may here be stated, that the survey of the river was made by taking the bearings of every point with a pocket compass, estimating the distances, and making a connected eye-sketch of the whole. This part of the survey was allotted to Messrs. Back and Hood conjointly: Mr. Hood also protracted the route every evening on a ruled map, after the courses and distances had been corrected by observations for latitude and longitude, taken by myself as often as the weather would allow. The extraordinary talent of this young officer in this line of service proved of the greatest advantage to the Expedition, and he continued to perform that duty until his lamented death, with a degree of zeal and accuracy that characterized all his pursuits.

The next morning our camp was in motion at five A.M., and we soon afterwards embarked with the flattering accompaniment of a fair wind: it proved, however, too light to enable us to stem

the stream, and we were obliged to resume the fatiguing operation of tracking; sometimes under cliffs so steep that the men could scarcely find a footing, and not unfrequently over spots rendered so miry by the small streams that trickled from above, as to be almost impassable. In the course of the day we passed the scene of a very melancholy accident. Some years ago, two families of Indians, induced by the flatness of a small beach, which lay betwixt the cliff and the river, chose it as the site of their encampment. They retired quietly to rest, not aware that the precipice, detached from the bank, and urged by an accumulation of water in the crevice behind, was tottering to its base. It fell during the night, and the whole party was buried under its ruins.

The length of our voyage to-day was, in a direct line, sixteen miles and a quarter, on a S.S.W. course. We encamped soon after sunset, and the tent was scarcely pitched when a heavy rain began, which continued all night.

Sixteen miles on the 11th, and five on the following morning, brought us to the commencement of Hayes' River, which is formed by the confluence of the Shamattawa and Steel Rivers. Our observations place this spot in latitude 55° 22′ 32″ N., longitude 93° 1′ 37″ W. It is forty-eight miles and a half from York Factory

including the windings of the river. Steel River, through which our course lay, is about three hundred yards wide at its mouth; its banks have more elevation than those of Hayes' River, but they shelve more gradually down to the stream, and afford a tolerably good towing path, which compensates, in some degree, for the rapids and frequent shoals that impede its navigation. We succeeded in getting about ten miles above the mouth of the river, before the close of day compelled us to disembark.

We made an effort, on the morning of the 13th, to stem the current under sail, but as the course of the river was very serpentine, we found that greater progress could be made by tracking. Steel River presents much beautiful scenery; it winds through a narrow, but well wooded, valley, which at every turn disclosed to us an agreeable variety of prospect, rendered more picturesque by the effect of the season on the foliage, now ready to drop from the trees. The light yellow of the fading poplars formed a fine contrast to the dark evergreen of the spruce, whilst the willows of an intermediate hue, served to shade the two principal masses of colour into each other. The scene was occasionally enlivened by the bright purple tints of the dogwood, blended with the browner shades of the dwarf

birch, and frequently intermixed with the gay yellow flowers of the shrubby cinquefoil. With all these charms, the scene appeared desolate from the want of the human species. The stillness was so great, that even the twittering of the *whiskey-johneesh*, or cinereous crow, caused us to start. Our voyage to-day was sixteen miles on a S.W. course.

*Sept.* 14.—We had much rain during the night, and also in the morning, which detained us in our encampment later than usual. We set out as soon as the weather cleared up; and in a short time arrived at the head of Steel River, where it is formed by the junction of Fox and Hill Rivers. These two rivers are nearly of equal width, but the latter is the most rapid. Mr. M'Donald, on his way to Red River, in a small canoe, manned by two Indians, overtook us at this place. It may be mentioned as a proof of the dexterity of the Indians, and the skill with which they steal upon their game, that they had on the preceding day, with no other arms than a hatchet, killed two deer, a hawk, a curlew, and a sturgeon. Three of the Company's boats joined us in the course of the morning, and we pursued our course up Hill River in company. The water in this river was so low, and the rapids so bad, that we were obliged several times, in the course of the

day, to jump into the water, and assist in lifting the boat over the large stones which impeded the navigation. The length of our voyage to-day was only six miles and three quarters.

The four boats commenced operations together at five o'clock the following morning; but our boat being overladen, we soon found that we were unable to keep pace with the others; and, therefore, proposed to the gentlemen in charge of the Company's boats, that they should relieve us of part of our cargo. This they declined doing, under the plea of not having received orders to that effect, notwithstanding that the circular, with which I was furnished by Governor Williams, strictly enjoined all the Company's servants to afford us every assistance. In consequence of this refusal we dropt behind, and our steersman, who was inexperienced, being thus deprived of the advantage of observing the route followed by the guide, who was in the foremost boat, frequently took a wrong channel. The tow-line broke twice, and the boat was only prevented from going broadside down the stream, and breaking to pieces against the stones, by the officers and men leaping into the water, and holding her head to the current until the line could be carried again to the shore. It is but justice to say, that in these trying situations, we received

much assistance from Mr. Thomas Swaine, who with great kindness waited for us with the boat under his charge at such places as he apprehended would be most difficult to pass. We encamped at sunset, completely jaded with toil. Our distance made good this day was twelve miles and a quarter.

The labours of the 16th commenced at half past five, and for some time the difficulty of getting the boats over the rapids was equal to what we experienced the day before. Having passed a small brook, however, termed *Half-way Creek*, the river became deeper, and although rapid, it was smooth enough to be named by our Orkney boatmen *Still-water*. We were further relieved by the Company's clerks consenting to take a few boxes of our stores into their boats. Still we made only eleven miles in the course of the day.

The banks of Hill River are higher, and have a more broken outline, than those of Steel or Hayes' Rivers. The cliffs of alluvial clay rose in some places to the height of eighty or ninety feet above the stream, and were surmounted by hills about two hundred feet high, but the thickness of the wood prevented us from seeing far beyond the mere banks of the river.

*September* 17.—About half past five in the morning we commenced tracking, and soon came

to a ridge of rock which extended across the stream. From this place the boat was dragged up several narrow rocky channels, until we came to the Rock Portage, where the stream, pent in by a range of small islands, forms several cascades. In ascending the river, the boats with their cargoes are carried over one of the islands, but in the descent they are shot down the most shelving of the cascades. Having performed the operations of carrying, launching, and restowing the cargo, we plied the oars for a short distance, and landed at a depôt called Rock House. Here we were informed that the rapids in the upper parts of Hill River were much worse and more numerous than those we had passed, particularly in the present season, owing to the unusual lowness of the water. This intelligence was very mortifying, especially as the gentlemen in charge of the Company's boats declared that they were unable to carry any part of our stores beyond this place; and the traders, guides, and most experienced of the boatmen, were of opinion, that unless our boat was still further lightened, the winter would put a stop to our progress before we could reach Cumberland House, or any eligible post. Sixteen pieces were therefore necessarily left with Mr. Bunn, the gentleman in charge

of the post, to be forwarded by the Athabasca canoes next season, this being their place of rendezvous.

After this we recommenced our voyage, and having pulled nearly a mile, arrived at Borrowick's Fall, where the boat was dragged up with a line, after part of the cargo had been carried over a small portage. From this place to the Mud Portage, a distance of a mile and three quarters, the boats were pushed on with poles against a very rapid stream. Here we encamped, having come seven miles during the day on a S.W. course. We had several snow showers in the course of the day, and the thermometer at bed-time stood at 30°.

On the morning of the 18th, the country was clothed in the livery of winter, a heavy fall of snow having taken place during the night. We embarked at the usual hour, and in the course of the day, crossed the Point of Rocks and Brassa Portages, and dragged the boats through several minor rapids. In this tedious way we only made good about nine miles.

On Sunday the 19th we hauled the boats up several short rapids, or, as the boatmen term them, expressively enough, *spouts*, and carried them over the Portages of Lower Burntwood and

Morgan's Rocks; on the latter of which we encamped, having proceeded, during the whole day only one mile and three quarters.

The upper part of Hill River swells out considerably, and at Morgan's Rocks, where it is three quarters of a mile wide, we were gratified with a more extensive prospect of the country than any we had enjoyed since leaving York Factory. The banks of the river here, consisting of low flat rocks with intermediate swamps, permitted us to obtain views of the interior, the surface of which is broken into a multitude of cone-shaped hills. The highest of these hills, which gives a name to the river, has an elevation not exceeding six hundred feet. From its summit, thirty-six lakes are said to be visible. The beauty of the scenery, dressed in the tints of autumn called forth our admiration, and was the subject of Mr. Hood's accurate pencil. On the 20th we passed Upper Burntwood and Rocky Ledge Portages, besides several strong *spouts;* and in the evening arrived at Smooth Rock Portage, where we encamped, having come three miles and a half. It is not easy for any but an eye-witness to form an adequate idea of the exertions of the Orkney boatmen in the navigation of this river. The necessity they are under of frequently jumping into the water to lift the boats

over the rocks, compels them to remain the whole day in wet clothes, at a season when the temperature is far below the freezing point. The immense loads too, which they carry over the portages, is not more a matter of surprise than the alacrity with which they perform these laborious duties.

At six on the morning of the 21st, we left our encampment, and soon after arrived at the Mossy Portage, where the cargoes were carried through a deep bog for a quarter of a mile. The river swells out, above this portage, to the breadth of several miles, and as the islands are numerous there are a great variety of channels. Night overtook us before we arrived at the *Second Portage*, so named from its being the second in the passage down the river. Our whole distance this day was one mile and a quarter.

On the 22d our route led us amongst many wooded islands, which, lying in long vistas, produced scenes of much beauty. In the course of the day we crossed the Upper Portage, surmounted the Devil's Landing Place, and urged the boat with poles through Groundwater Creek. At the upper end of this creek, our bowman having given the boat too great a sheer, to avoid the rock, it was caught on the broadside by the current, and, in defiance of our utmost exertions,

hurried down the rapid. Fortunately, however, it grounded against a rock high enough to prevent the current from oversetting it, and the crews of the other boats having come to our assistance, we succeeded, after several trials, in throwing a rope to them, with which they dragged our almost sinking vessel stern foremost up the stream, and rescued us from our perilous situation. We encamped in the dusk of the evening amidst a heavy thunder-storm, having advanced two miles and three quarters.

About ten in the morning of the 23d we arrived at the *Dramstone*, which is hailed with pleasure by the boats' crews, as marking the termination of the laborious ascent of Hill River. We complied with the custom from whence it derives its name, and soon after landing upon Sail Island prepared breakfast. In the mean time our boatmen cut down and rigged a new mast, the old one having been thrown overboard at the mouth of Steel River, where it ceased to be useful. We left Sail Island with a fair wind, and soon afterwards arrived at a depôt situated on Swampy Lake, where we received a supply of mouldy *pemmican* *. Mr. Calder and his attendant were the only tenants of this cheerless abode, and their only food was

* Buffalo meat, dried and pounded, and mixed with melted fat.

the wretched stuff with which they supplied us, the lake not yielding fish at this season. After a short delay at this post, we sailed through the remainder of Swampy Lake, and slept at the Lower Portage in Jack River; the distance sailed to-day being sixteen miles and a half.

Jack River is only eight miles long; but being full of bad rapids, it detained us considerably. At seven in the morning of the 24th, we crossed the Long Portage, where the woods, having caught fire in the summer, were still smoking. This is a common accident, owing to the neglect of the Indians and voyagers in not putting out their fires, and in a dry season the woods may be seen blazing to the extent of many miles. We afterwards crossed the Second, or Swampy Portage, and in the evening encamped on the Upper Portage, where we were overtaken by an Indian bringing an answer from Governor Williams to a letter I had written to him on the 15th, in which he renewed his injunctions to the gentlemen of the boats accompanying us, to afford us every assistance in their power. The Aurora Borealis appeared this evening in form of a bright arch, extending across the zenith in a N.W. and S.E. direction. The extent of our voyage to-day was two miles.

About noon, on the 25th, we entered Knee

Lake, which has a very irregular form, and near its middle takes a sudden turn, from whence it derives its name. It is thickly studded with islands, and its shores are low and well-wooded. The surrounding country, as far as we could see, is flat, being destitute even of the moderate elevations which occur near the upper part of Hill River. The weather was remarkably fine, and the setting sun threw the richest tints over the scene that I remember ever to have witnessed.

About half a mile from the bend or *knee* of the lake, there is a small rocky islet, composed of magnetic iron ore, which affects the magnetic needle at a considerable distance. Having received previous information respecting this circumstance, we watched our compasses carefully, and perceived that they were affected at the distance of three hundred yards, both on the approach to and departure from the rock: on decreasing the distance, they became gradually more and more unsteady, and on landing they were rendered quite useless; and it was evident that the general magnetic influence was totally overpowered by the local attraction of the ore. When Kater's compass was held near to the ground on the N.W. side of the island, the needle dipped so much that the card could not be made to traverse by any adjustment of the hand; but

on moving the same compass about thirty yards to the west part of the islet, the needle became horizontal, traversed freely, and pointed to the magnetic north. The dipping needle being landed on the S.W. point of the islet, was adjusted as nearly as possible on the magnetic meridian by the sun's bearings, and found to vibrate freely, when the face of the instrument was directed to the east or west. The mean dip it gave was 80° 37′ 50″. When the instrument was removed from the N.W. to the S.E. point, about twenty yards distant, and placed on the meridian, the needle ceased to traverse, but remained steady at an angle of 60°. On changing the face of the instrument, so as to give a S.E. and N.W. direction to the needle, it hung vertically. The position of the slaty strata of the magnetic ore is also vertical. Their direction is extremely irregular, being much contorted.

Knee Lake towards its upper end becomes narrower, and its rocky shores are broken into conical and rounded eminences, destitute of soil, and of course devoid of trees. We slept at the western extremity of the lake, having come during the day nineteen miles and a half on a S.W. course.

We began the ascent of Trout River early in the morning of the 27th, and in the course of the

day passed three portages and several rapids. At the first of these portages the river falls between two rocks about sixteen feet, and it is necessary to launch the boat over a precipitous rocky bank. This cascade is named the *Trout-Fall*, and the beauty of the scenery afforded a subject for Mr. Hood's pencil. The rocks which form the bed of this river are slaty, and present sharp fragments, by which the feet of the boatmen are much lacerated. The Second Portage, in particular, obtains the expressive name of *Knife Portage*. The length of our voyage to-day was three miles.

On the 28th we passed through the remainder of Trout River; and, at noon, arrived at Oxford House, on Holey Lake. This was formerly a post of some consequence to the Hudson's Bay Company, but at present it exhibits unequivocal signs of decay. The Indians have of late years been gradually deserting the low or swampy country, and ascending the Saskatchawan, where animals are more abundant. A few Crees were at this time encamped in front of the fort. They were suffering under hooping-cough and measles, and looked miserably dejected. We endeavoured in vain to prevail on one of them to accompany us for the purpose of killing ducks, which were numerous, but too shy for our sportsmen. We had

the satisfaction, however, of exchanging the mouldy pemmican, obtained at Swampy Lake, for a better kind, and received, moreover, a small, but very acceptable, supply of fish. Holey Lake, viewed from an eminence behind Oxford House, exhibits a pleasing prospect; and its numerous islands, varying much in shape and elevation, contribute to break that uniformity of scenery which proves so palling to a traveller in this country. Trout of a great size, frequently exceeding forty pounds' weight, abound in this lake. We left Oxford House in the afternoon, and encamped on an island about eight miles' distant, having come, during the day, nine miles and a quarter.

At noon, on the 29th, after passing through the remainder of Holey Lake, we entered the Weepinapannis, a narrow grassy river, which runs parallel to the lake for a considerable distance, and forms its south bank into a narrow peninsula. In the morning we arrived at the Swampy Portage, where two of the boats were broken against the rocks. The length of the day's voyage was nineteen miles and a half.

In consequence of the accident yesterday evening, we were detained a considerable time this morning, until the boats were repaired, when we set out, and, after ascending a strong rapid, arrived

at the portage by John Moore's Island. Here the river rushes with irresistible force through the channels formed by two rocky islands; and we learned, that last year a poor man, in hauling a boat up one of these channels, was, by the breaking of the line, precipitated into the stream and hurried down the cascade with such rapidity, that all efforts to save him were ineffectual. His body was afterwards found, and interred near the spot.

The Weepinapannis is composed of several branches which separate and unite, again and again, intersecting the country in a great variety of directions. We pursued the principal channel, and having passed the Crooked Spout, with several inferior rapids, and crossed a small piece of water, named Windy Lake, we entered a smooth deep stream about three hundred yards wide, which has got the absurd appellation of the Rabbit Ground. The marshy banks of this river are skirted by low barren rocks, behind which there are some groups of stunted tress. As we advanced, the country becoming flatter, gradually opened to our view, and we at length arrived at a shallow, reedy lake, the direct course through which leads to the Hill Portage. This route has, however, of late years been disused, and we therefore turned towards the north, and crossing a small

arm of the lake, arrived at Hill Gates by sunset; having come this day eleven miles.

*October* 1.—Hill gates is the name imposed on a romantic defile, whose rocky walls, rising perpendicularly to the height of sixty or eighty feet, hem in the stream for three quarters of a mile, in many places so narrowly, that there is a want of room to ply the oars. In passing through this chasm we were naturally led to contemplate the mighty but, probably, slow and gradual effects of the water in wearing down such vast masses of rock; but in the midst of our speculations, the attention was excited anew to a grand and picturesque rapid, which, surrounded by the most wild and majestic scenery, terminated the defile. The brown fishing-eagle had built its nest on one of the projecting cliffs. In the course of the day we surmounted this and another dangerous portage, called, the Upper and Lower Hill Gate Portages, crossed a small sheet of water, termed the White Fall Lake, and entering the river of the same name, arrived at the White Fall about an hour after sunset, having come fourteen miles on a S.W. course.

The whole of the 2d of October was spent in carrying the cargoes over a portage of thirteen hundred yards in length, and in launching the empty boats over three several ridges of rock

which obstruct the channel and produce as many cascades. I shall long remember the rude and characteristic wildness of the scenery which surrounded these falls; rocks piled on rocks hung in rude and shapeless masses over the agitated torrents which swept their bases, whilst the bright and variegated tints of the mosses and lichens, that covered the face of the cliffs, contrasting with the dark green of the pines which crowned their summits, added both beauty and grandeur to the scene. Our two companions, Back and Hood, made accurate sketches of these falls. At this place we observed a conspicuous *lop-stick*, a kind of land-mark, which I have not hitherto noticed, notwithstanding its great use in pointing out the frequented routes. It is a pine-tree divested of its lower branches, and having only a small tuft at the top remaining. This operation is usually performed at the instance of some individual emulous of fame. He treats his companions with rum, and they in return strip the tree of its branches, and ever after designate it by his name.

In the afternoon, whilst on my way to superintend the operations of the men, a stratum of loose moss gave way under my feet, and I had the misfortune to slip from the summit of a rock into the river betwixt two of the falls. My

attempts to regain the bank were, for a time ineffectual, owing to the rocks within my reach having been worn smooth by the action of the water; but, after I had been carried a considerable distance down the stream, I caught hold of a willow, by which I held until two gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company came in a boat to my assistance. The only bad cosequence of this accident was an injury sustained by a very valuable chronometer, (No. 1733,) belonging to Daniel Moore, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn. One of the gentlemen to whom I delivered it immediately on landing, in his agitation let it fall, whereby the minute-hand was broken, but the works were not in the smallest degree injured, and the loss of the hand was afterwards supplied.

During the night the frost was severe; and at sunrise, on the 3d, the thermometer stood at 25°. After leaving our encampment at the White Fall, we passed through several small lakes connected with each other by narrow deep, grassy streams, and at noon arrived at the Painted Stone. Numbers of musk-rats frequent these streams; and we observed, in the course of the morning, many o their mud-houses rising in a conical form to the height of two or three feet above the grass of the swamps in which they were built.

The Painted Stone is a low rock, ten or twelve yards across, remarkable for the marshy streams which arise on each side of it, taking different courses. On the one side, the water-course which we had navigated from York Factory commences. This spot may therefore be considered as one of the smaller sources of Hayes' River. On the other side of the stone the Echemamis rises, and taking a westerly direction falls into Nelson River. It is said that there was formerly a stone placed near the centre of this portage on which figures were annually traced, and offerings deposited, by the Indians; but the stone has been removed many years, and the spot has ceased to be held in veneration. Here we were overtaken by Governor Williams, who left York Factory on the 20th of last month in an Indian canoe. He expressed much regret at our having been obliged to leave part of our stores at the Rock depôt, and would have brought them up with him had he been able to procure and man a boat, or a canoe of sufficient size.

Having launched the boats over the rock, we commenced the descent of the Echemamis. This small stream has its course through a morass, and in dry seasons its channel contains, instead of water, merely a foot or two of thin mud. On these occasions it is customary to build dams

that it may be rendered navigable by the accumulation of its waters. As the beavers perform this operation very effectually, endeavours have been made to encourage them to breed in this place, but it has not hitherto been possible to restrain the Indians from killing that useful animal whenever they discover its retreats. On the present occasion there was no want of water, the principal impediment we experienced being from the narrowness of the channel, which permitted the willows of each bank to meet over our heads, and obstruct the men at the oars. After proceeding down the stream for some time, we came to a recently-constructed beaver-dam through which an opening was made sufficient to admit the boat to pass. We were assured that the breach would be closed by the industrious creature in a single night. We encamped about eight miles from the source of the river, having come during the day seventeen miles and a half.

On the 4th we embarked amidst a heavy rain, and pursued our route down the Echemamis. In many parts the morass, by which the river is nourished, and through which it flows, is intersected by ridges of rock which cross the channel, and require the boat to be lifted over them. In the afternoon we passed through a shallow piece of water overgrown with bulrushes, and hence

named Hairy Lake; and, in the evening, en camped on the banks of Blackwater Creek, by which this lake empties itself into Sea River; having come during the day twenty miles and three quarters.

On the morning of the 5th, we entered Sea River, one of the many branches of Nelson River. It is about four hundred yards wide, and its waters are of a muddy white colour. After ascending the stream for an hour or two, and passing through Carpenter's Lake, which is merely an expansion of the river to about a mile in breadth, we came to the Sea River Portage, where the boat was launched across a smooth rock, to avoid a fall of four or five feet. Re-embarking at the upper end of the portage, we ran before a fresh gale through the remainder of Sea River, the lower part of Play Green Lake, and entering Little Jack River, landed and pitched our tents. Here there is a small log-hut, the residence of a fisherman, who supplies Norway House with trout and sturgeon. He gave us a few of these fish, which afforded an acceptable supper. Our voyage this day was thirty-four miles.

*October* 6.—Little Jack River is the name given to a channel that winds among several large islands which separate Upper and Lower

Play Green Lakes. At the lower end of this channel, Big Jack River, a stream of considerable magnitude, falls into the lake. Play Green is a translation of the appellation given to that lake by two bands of Indians, who met and held a festival on an island situated near its centre. After leaving our encampment we sailed through Upper Play Green Lake, and arrived at Norway Point in the forenoon.

The waters of Lake Winipeg, and of the rivers that run into it, the Saskatchawan in particular, are rendered turbid by the suspension of a large quantity of white clay. Play Green Lake and Nelson River, being the discharges of the Winipeg, are equally opaque, a circumstance that renders the sunken rocks, so frequent in these waters, very dangerous to boats in a fresh breeze. Owing to this, one of the boats that accompanied us, sailing at the rate of seven miles an hour, struck upon one of these rocks. Its mast was carried away by the shock, but fortunately no other damage sustained. The Indians ascribe the muddiness of these lakes to an adventure of one of their deities, a mischievous fellow, a sort of Robin Puck, whom they hold in very little esteem. This deity, who is named Weesakootchaht, possesses considerable power, but makes a capricious use of it, and delights

in tormenting the poor Indians. He is not, however, invincible, and was foiled in one of his attempts by the artifice of an old woman, who succeeded in taking him captive. She called in all the women of the tribe to aid in his punishment, and he escaped from their hands in a condition so filthy that it required all the waters of the Great Lake to wash him clean; and ever since that period it has been entitled to the appellation of Winipeg, or Muddy water.

Norway Point forms the extremity of a narrow peninsula which separates Play Green and Winipeg Lakes. Buildings were first erected here by a party of Norwegians, who were driven away from the colony at Red River by the commotions which took place some time ago. It is now a trading post belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. On landing at Norway House we met with Lord Selkirk's colonists, who had started from York Factory the day before us.—These poor people were exceedingly pleased at meeting with us again in this wild country; having accompanied them across the Atlantic, they viewed us in the light of old acquaintances. This post was under the charge of Mr. James Sutherland, to whom I am indebted for replacing a minute-hand on the chronometer, which was

broken at the White Fall, and I had afterwards the satisfaction of finding that it went with extraordinary regularity.

The morning of the 7th October was beautifully clear, and the observations we obtained place Norway House in latitude 53° 41′ 38″ N., and longitude 98° 1′ 24″ W.; the variation of the magnetic needle 14° 12′ 41″ E., and its dip 83° 40′ 10″. Though our route from York Factory has rather inclined to the S. W., the dip, it will be perceived, has gradually increased. The difference produced by reversing the face of the instrument was 7° 39′. There was too much wind to admit of our observing, with any degree of accuracy, the quantity of the magnetic force.

We left Norway House soon after noon, and the wind being favourable, sailed along the northern shore of Lake Winipeg the whole of the ensuing night; and on the morning of the 8th landed on a narrow ridge of sand, which, running out twenty miles to the westward, separates Limestone Bay from the body of the Lake. When the wind blows hard from the southward, it is customary to carry boats across this isthmus, and to pull up under its lee. From Norwegian Point to Limestone Bay the shore consists of high clay cliffs, against which the

waves beat with violence during strong southerly winds. When the wind blows from the land, and the waters of the lake are low, a narrow sandy beach is uncovered, and affords a landing-place for boats. The shores of Limestone Bay are covered with small fragments of calcareous stones. During the night the Aurora Borealis was quick in its motions, and various and vivid in its colours. After breakfasting we re-embarked, and continued our voyage until three P.M., when a strong westerly wind arising, we were obliged to shelter ourselves on a small island, which lies near the extremity of the above-mentioned peninsula. This island is formed of a collection of small rolled pieces of limestone, and was remembered by some of our boatmen to have been formerly covered with water. For the last ten or twelve years the waters of the lake have been low, but our information did not enable us to judge whether the decrease was merely casual, or going on continually, or periodical. The distance of this island from Norway House is thirty-eight miles and a half.

The westerly winds detained us all the morning of the 9th, but, at two P.M., the wind chopped round to the eastward; we immediately embarked, and the breeze afterwards freshening,

we reached the mouth of the Saskatchawan at midnight, having run thirty-two miles.

*Sunday, October* 10.—The whole of this day was occupied in getting the boats from the mouth of the river to the foot of the grand rapid, a distance of two miles. There are several rapids in this short distance, during which the river varies its breadth from five hundred yards to half a mile. Its channel is stony. At the grand rapid, the Saskatchawan forms a sudden bend, from south to east, and works its way through a narrow channel, deeply worn into the limestone strata. The stream, rushing with impetuous force over a rocky and uneven bottom, presents a sheet of foam, and seems to bear with impatience the straitened confinement of its lofty banks. A flock of pelicans, and two or three brown fishing eagles, were fishing in its agitated waters, seemingly with great success. There is a good sturgeon fishery at the foot of the rapid. Several golden plovers, Canadian grosbeaks, cross-bills, wood-peckers, and pin-tailed grouse, were shot to-day; and Mr. Back killed a small striped marmot. This beautiful little animal was busily employed in carrying in its distended pouches the seeds of the American vetch to its winter hoards.

The portage is eighteen hundred yards long, and its western extremity was found to be in 53° 08′ 25″ North latitude, and 99° 28′ 02″ West longitude. The route from Canada to the Athabasca joins that from York Factory at the mouth of the Saskatchawan, and we saw traces of a recent encampment of the Canadian voyagers. Our companions in the Hudson's Bay boats, dreading an attack from their rivals in trade, were on the alert at this place. They examined minutely the spot of encampment, to form a judgment of the number of canoes that had preceded them; and they advanced, armed, and with great caution, through the woods. Their fears, however, on this occasion, were fortunately groundless.

By noon, on the 12th, the boats and their cargoes having been conveyed across the portage, we embarked, and pursued our course. The Saskatchawan becomes wider above the Grand Rapid, and the scenery improves. The banks are high, composed of white clay and limestone, and their summits are richly clothed with a variety of firs, poplars, birches, and willows. The current runs with great rapidity, and the channel is in many places intricate and dangerous, from broken ridges of rock jutting into the stream. We pitched our tents at the

entrance of Cross Lake, having advanced only five miles and a half.

Cross Lake is extensive, running towards the N.E. it is said, for forty miles. We crossed it at a narrow part, and pulling through several winding channels, formed by a group of islands, entered Cedar Lake, which, next to Lake Winipeg, is the largest sheet of fresh water we had hitherto seen. Ducks and geese resort hither in immense flocks in the spring and autumn. These birds were now beginning to go off, owing to its muddy shores having become quite hard through the nightly frosts. At this place the Aurora Borealis was extremely brilliant in the night, its coruscations darting, at times, over the whole sky, and assuming various prismatic tints, of which the violet and yellow were predominant.

After pulling, on the 14th, seven miles and a quarter on the lake, a violent wind drove us for shelter to a small island, or rather a ridge of rolled stones, thrown up by the frequent storms which agitate this lake. The weather did not moderate the whole day, and we were obliged to pass the night on this exposed spot. The delay, however, enabled us to obtain some lunar observations. The wind having subsided, we left our resting-place the following morning, crossed the remainder of the lake, and in the afternoon,

arrived at Muddy Lake, which is very appropriately named, as it consists merely of a few channels, winding amongst extensive mud banks, which are overflowed during the spring floods. We landed at an Indian tent, which contained two numerous families, amounting to thirty souls. These poor creatures were badly clothed, and reduced to a miserable condition by the hooping-cough and measles. At the time of our arrival they were busy in preparing a sweating-house for the sick. This is a remedy which they consider, with the addition of singing and drumming, to be the grand specific for all diseases. Our companions having obtained some geese, in exchange for rum and tobacco, we proceeded a few more miles, and encamped on Devil's Drum Island, having come, during the day, twenty miles and a half. A second party of Indians were encamped on an adjoining island, a situation chosen for the purpose of killing geese and ducks.

On the 16th we proceeded eighteen miles up the Saskatchawan. Its banks are low, covered with willows, and lined with drift timber. The surrounding country is swampy and intersected by the numerous arms of the river. After passing for twenty or thirty yards through the willow thicket on the banks of the stream, we entered

an extensive marsh, varied only by a distant line of willows, which marks the course of a creek or branch of the river. The branch we navigated to-day, is almost five hundred yards wide. The exhalations from the marshy soil produced a low fog, although the sky above was perfectly clear. In the course of the day we passed an Indian encampment of three tents, whose inmates appeared to be in a still more miserable condition than those we saw yesterday. They had just finished the ceremony of conjuration over some of their sick companions; and a dog, which had been recently killed as a sacrifice to some deity, was hanging to a tree where it would be left (I was told) when they moved their encampment.

We continued our voyage up the river to the 20th with little variation of scenery or incident, travelling in that time about thirty miles. The near approach of winter was marked by severe frosts, which continued all day unless when the sun chanced to be unusually bright, and the geese and ducks were observed to take a southerly course in large flocks. On the morning of the 20th we came to a party of Indians, encamped behind the bank of the river on the borders of a small marshy lake, for the purpose of killing water-fowl. Here we were gratified with the

view of a very large tent. Its length was about forty feet, its breadth eighteen, and its covering was moose deer leather, with apertures for the escape of the smoke from the fires which are placed at each end; a ledge of wood was placed on the ground on both sides the whole length of the tent, within which were the sleeping-places, arranged probably according to families; and the drums and other instruments of enchantment were piled up in the centre. Amongst the Indians there were a great many half-breeds, who led an Indian life. Governor Williams gave a dram and a piece of tobacco to each of the males of the party.

On the morning of the 21st a heavy fall of snow took place, which lasted until two in the afternoon. In the evening we left the Saskatchawan, and entered the Little River, one of the two streams by which Pine Island Lake discharges its waters. We advanced to-day fourteen miles and a quarter. On the 22d the weather was extremely cold and stormy, and we had to contend against a strong head wind. The spray froze as it fell, and the oars were so loaded with ice as to be almost unmanageable. The length of our voyage this day was eleven miles.

The following morning was very cold; we embarked at day-light, and pulled across a part of

Pine Island Lake, about three miles and a half to Cumberland House. The margin of the lake was so incrusted with ice, that we had to break through a considerable space of it to approach the landing-place. When we considered that this was the effect of only a few days' frost at the commencement of winter, we were convinced of the impractibility of advancing further by water this season, and therefore resolved on accepting Governor Williams's kind invitation to remain with him at this post. We immediately visited Mr. Connolly, the resident partner of the North-West Company, and presented to him Mr. Mac Gillivray's circular letter. He assured us that he should be most desirous to forward our progress by every means in his power, and we subsequently had ample proofs of his sincerity and kindness. The unexpected addition of our party to the winter residents at this post, rendered an increase of apartments necessary; and our men were immediately appointed to complete and arrange an unfinished building as speedily as possible.

*November* 8.—Some mild weather succeeded to the severe frosts we had at our arrival; and the lake had not been entirely frozen before the 6th; but this morning the ice was sufficiently firm to admit of sledges crossing it. The dogs were

harnessed at a very early hour, and the winter operations commenced by sending for a supply of fish from Swampy River, where men had been stationed to collect it, just before the frost set in. Both men and dogs appeared to enjoy the change; they started in full glee, and drove rapidly along. An Indian, who had come to the house on the preceding evening to request some provision for his family, whom he represented to be in a state of starvation, accompanied them. His party had been suffering greatly under the epidemic diseases of hooping-cough and measles; and the hunters were still in too debilitated a state to go out and provide them with meat. A supply was given to him, and the men were directed to bring his father, an old and faithful hunter, to the house, that he might have the comforts of nourishment and warmth. He was brought accordingly, but these attentions were unavailing as he died a few days afterwards. Two days before his death I was surprised to observe him sitting for nearly three hours, in a piercingly sharp day, in the saw-pit, employed in gathering the dust, and throwing it by handfuls over his body, which was naked to the waist. As the man was in possession of his mental faculties, I conceived he was performing some devotional act preparatory to his departure, which he felt to be approaching, and

induced by the novelty of the incident, I went twice to observe him more closely; but when he perceived that he was noticed, he immediately ceased his operation, hung down his head, and by his demeanour, intimated that he considered my appearance an intrusion. The residents at the fort could give me no information on the subject, and I could not learn that the Indians in general observe any particular ceremony on the approach of death.

*November* 15.—The sky had been overcast during the last week; the sun shone forth once only, and then not sufficiently for the purpose of obtaining observations. Faint coruscations of the Aurora Borealis appeared one evening, but their presence did not in the least affect the electrometer or the compass. The ice daily became thicker in the lake, and the frost had now nearly overpowered the rapid current of the Saskatchawan River; indeed, parties of men who were sent from both the forts to search for the Indians, and procure whatever skins and provisions they might have collected, crossed that stream this day on the ice. The white partridges made their first appearance near the house, which birds are considered as the infallible harbingers of severe weather.

*Monday, November* 22.—The Saskatchawan,

and every other river, were now completely covered with ice, except a small stream not far from the fort through which the current ran very powerfully. In the course of the week we removed into the house our men had prepared since our arrival. We found it at first extremely cold notwithstanding that a good fire was kept in each apartment, and we frequently experienced the extremes of heat and cold on opposite sides of the body.

*November* 24.—We obtained observations for the dip of the needle and intensity of the magnetic force in a spare room. The dip was 83° 9′ 45″, and the difference produced by reversing the face of the instrument 13° 3′ 6″. When the needle was faced to the west it hung nearly perpendicular. The Aurora Borealis had been faintly visible for a short time the preceding evening. Some Indians arrived in search of provision, having been totally incapacitated from hunting by sickness; the poor creatures looked miserably ill, and they represented their distress to have been extreme. Few recitals are more affecting than those of their sufferings during unfavourable seasons, and in bad situations for hunting and fishing. Many assurances have been given me that men and women are yet living who have been reduced to feed upon the

bodies of their own family, to prevent actual starvation; and a shocking case was cited to us of a woman who had been principal agent in the destruction of several persons, and amongst the number her husband and nearest relatives, in order to support life.

*November* 28.—The atmosphere had been clear every day during the last week, about the end of which snow fell, when the thermometer rose from 20° below to 16° above zero. The Aurora Borealis was twice visible, but faint on both occasions. Its appearance did not affect the electrometer, nor could we perceive the compass to be disturbed.

The men brought supplies of moose meat from the hunter's tent, which is pitched near the Basquiau Hill, forty or fifty miles from the house, and whence the greatest part of the meat is procured. The residents have to send nearly the same distance for their fish, and on this service horse-sledges are used. Nets are daily set in Pine Island Lake which occasionally procure some fine sturgeon, tittameg, and trout; but not more than sufficient to supply the officers' table.

*December* 1.—This day was so remarkably fine, that we procured another set of observations for the dip of the needle in the open air; the

instrument being placed firmly on a rock, the results gave 83° 14′ 22″, The change produced by reversing the face of the instrument, was 12° 50′ 55″.

There had been a determined thaw during the last three days. The ice on the Saskatchawan River and some parts of the lake, broke up, and the travelling across either became dangerous. On this account the absence of Wilks, one of our men, caused no small anxiety. He had incautiously undertaken the conduct of a sledge and dogs, in company with a person, going to Swampy River for fish. On their return, being unaccustomed to driving, he became fatigued, and seated himself on his sledge, where his companion left him, presuming that he would soon rise and hasten to follow his track. He however returned safe in the morning, and reported that, foreseeing night would set in before he could get across the lake, he prudently retired into the woods before dark, where he remained until day-light; when the men, who had been despatched to look for him, met him returning to the house, shivering with cold, he having been unprovided with the materials for lighting a fire; which an experienced voyager never neglects to carry.

We had mild weather until the 20th of December. On the 13th there had been a decided

thaw, that caused the Saskatchawan, which had again frozen, to re-open, and the passage across it was interrupted for two days. We now received more agreeable accounts from the Indians, who were recovering strength, and beginning to hunt a little; but it was generally feared that their spirits had been so much depressed by the loss of their children and relatives, that the season would be far advanced before they could be roused to any exertion in searching for animals beyond what might be necessary for their own support. It is much to be regretted that these poor men, during their long intercourse with Europeans, have not been taught how pernicious is the grief which produces total inactivity, and that they have not been furnished with any of the consolations which the Christian religion never fails to afford. This, however, could hardly have been expected from persons who have permitted their own offspring, the half-casts, to remain in lamentable ignorance on a subject of such vital importance. It is probable, however, that an improvement will soon take place among the latter class, as Governor Williams proposes to make the children attend a Sunday school, and has already begun to have divine service performed at his post.

The conversations which I had with the gentle-

men in charge of these posts, convinced me of the necessity of proceeding during the winter into the Athabasca department, the residents of which are best acquainted with the nature and resources of the country to the north of the Great Slave Lake; and whence only guides, hunters, and interpreters can be procured. I had previously written to the partners of the North-West Company in that quarter, requesting their assistance in forwarding the Expedition, and stating what we should require. But, on reflecting upon the accidents that might delay these letters on the road, I determined on proceeding to the Athabasca as soon as I possibly could, and communicated my intention to Governor Williams and Mr. Connolly, with a request that I might be furnished, by the middle of January, with the means of conveyance for three persons, intending that Mr. Back and Hepburn should accompany me, whilst Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood remained till the spring at Cumberland House.

After the 20th of December the weather became cold, the thermometer constantly below zero. Christmas-day was particularly stormy; but the gale did not prevent the full enjoyment of the festivities which are annually given at Cumber-

land House on this day. All the men who had been despatched to different parts in search of provision or furs returned to the fort on the occasion, and were regaled with a substantial dinner and a dance in the evening.

1820. Jan. 1. The new year was ushered in by repeated discharges of musketry; a ceremony which has been observed by the men of both the trading Companies for many years. Our party dined with Mr. Connolly, and were treated with a beaver, which we found extremely delicate. In the evening his voyagers were entertained with a dance, in which the Canadians exhibited some grace and much agility; and they contrived to infuse some portion of their activity and spirits into the steps of their female companions. The half-breed women are passionately fond of this amusement, but a stranger would imagine the contrary on witnessing their apparent want of animation. On such occasions they affect a sobriety of demeanour which I understand to be very opposite to their general character.

*January* 10.—This day I wrote to Governor Williams and Mr. Connolly, requesting them to prepare two canoes, with crews and appointments, for the conveyance of Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood, with our stores to Chipewyan as

soon as the navigation should open and had the satisfaction of receiving from both these gentlemen renewed assurances of their desire to promote the objects of the Expedition. I conceived it to be necessary, previous to my departure, to make some arrangement respecting the men who were engaged at Stromness. Only one of them was disposed to extend his engagement, and proceed beyond the Athabasca Lake; and, as there was much uncertainty whether the remaining three could get from the Athabasca to York Factory sufficiently early to secure them a passage in the next Hudson's Bay ship, I resolved not to take them forward, unless Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood should fail in procuring other men from these establishments next spring, but to despatch them down to York to bring up our stores to this place: after which they might return to the coast in time to secure their passage in the first ship.

I delivered to Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood a memorandum, containing the arrangements which had been made with the two Companies, respecting their being forwarded in the spring, and some other points of instruction for their guidance in my absence; together with directions to forward the map of our route, which had been finished, since our arrival, by Mr. Hood,

the drawings and the collections of natural history, by the first opportunity to York Factory, for conveyance to England*.

The houses of the two Companies, at this post are situated close to each other, at the upper extremity of a narrow island, which separates Pine Island Lake from the Saskatchawan River, and are about two miles and three quarters from the latter in a northern direction. They are log-houses, built without much regard to comfort, surrounded by lofty stockades, and flanked with wooden bastions. The difficulty of conveying glass into the interior has precluded its use in the windows, where its place is poorly supplied by parchment, imperfectly made by the native women from the skin of the rein-deer. Should this post, however, continue to be the residence of Governor Williams, it will be much improved in a few years, as he is devoting his attention to that point. The land around Cumberland House is low, but the soil, from having a considerable intermixture of limestone, is good, and capable of producing abundance of corn, and vegetables of every description. Many kinds of

* As Samuel Wilks, who had accompanied the Expedition from England, proved to be quite unequal to the fatigue of the journey, I directed him to be discharged in the spring, and sent to England by the next ship.

pot-herbs have already been brought to some perfection, and the potatoes bid fair to equal those of England. The spontaneous productions of nature would afford ample nourishment for all the European animals. Horses feed extremely well even during the winter, and so would oxen if provided with hay, which might be easily done*. Pigs also improve, but require to be kept warm in the winter. Hence it appears, that the residents might easily render themselves far less dependant on the Indians for support, and be relieved from the great anxiety which they too often suffer when the hunters are unsuccessful. The neighbourhood of the houses has been much cleared of wood, from the great demand for fuel; there is, therefore, little to admire in the surrounding scenery, especially in its winter garb; few animated objects occur to enliven the scene; an occasional fox, marten, rabbit, or wolf, and a few birds, contribute the only variety. The birds which remained were ravens, magpies, partridges, cross bills, and

* "The wild buffalo scrapes away the snow with its feet to get at the herbage beneath, and the horse, which was introduced by the Spanish invaders of Mexico, and may be said to have become naturalized, does the same; but it is worthy of remark, that the ox more lately brought from Europe, has not yet acquired an art so necessary for procuring its food."—(Extract from Dr. Richardson's Journal.)

woodpeckers. In this universal stillness, the residents at a post feel little disposed to wander abroad, except when called forth by their occupations; and as ours were of a kind best performed in a warm room, we imperceptibly acquired a sedentary habit. In going out, however, we never suffered the slightest inconvenience from the change of temperature, though the thermometer, in the open air, stood occasionally thirty degrees below zero.

The tribe of Indians, who reside in the vicinity, and frequent these establishments, is that of the Crees, or Knisteneaux. They were formerly a powerful and numerous nation, which ranged over a very extensive country, and were very successful in their predatory excursions against their neighbours, particularly the northern Indians, and some tribes on the Saskatchawan and Beaver Rivers; but they have long ceased to be held in any fear, and are now perhaps, the most harmless and inoffensive of the whole Indian race. This change is entirely to be attributed to their intercourse with Europeans; and the vast reduction in their numbers occasioned, I fear, principally, by the injudicious introduction of ardent spirits. They are so passionately fond of this poison, that they will make any sacrifice to obtain it. They are good hunters, and in ge-

neral active. Having laid the bow and arrow altogether aside, and the use of snares, except for rabbits and partridges, they depend entirely on the Europeans for the means of gaining subsistence, as they require guns, and a constant supply of powder and shot; so that these Indians are probably more completely under the power of the trader than any of the other tribes. As I only saw a few straggling parties of them during short intervals, and under unfavourable circumstances of sickness and famine, I am unable to give, from personal observation, any detail of their manners and customs; and must refer the reader, to Dr. Richardson's account of them, in the following chapter. That gentleman, during his longer residence at the post, had many opportunities of seeing them, and acquiring their language.

*January* 17.—This morning the sporting part of our society had rather a novel diversion: intelligence having been brought that a wolf had borne away a steel trap, in which he had been caught, a party went in search of the marauder, and took two English bull dogs and a terrier, which had been brought into the country this season. On the first sight of the animal the dogs became alarmed, and stood barking at a distance, and probably would not have ventured to ad-

vance, had they not seen the wolf fall by a shot from one of the gentlemen; they then, however, went up, and behaved courageously, and were enraged by the bites they received. The wolf soon died of its wounds, and the body was brought to the house, where a drawing of it was taken by Mr. Hood, and the skin preserved by Dr. Richardson. Its general features bore a strong resemblance to many of the dogs about the fort, but it was larger and had a more ferocious aspect. Mr. Back and I were too much occupied in preparing for our departure on the following day to join this excursion.

The position of Cumberland House, by our observations, is, latitude 53° 56′ 40″ N.; longitude 102° 16′ 41″ W., by the chronometers; variations 17° 17′ 29″ E.; dip of the needle, 83° 12′ 50″. The whole of the travelling distance between York Factory and Cumberland House is about six hundred and ninety miles.

## CHAPTER III.

Dr. Richardson's Residence at Cumberland House—His Account of the Cree Indians.

1820. January 19. FROM the departure of Messrs. Franklin and Back, on the 19th of January, for Chipewyan, until the opening of the navigation in the spring, the occurrences connected with the Expedition were so much in the ordinary routine of a winter's residence at Fort Cumberland, that they may be, perhaps, appropriately blended with the following general but brief account of that district and its inhabitants.

Cumberland House was originally built by Hearne, a year or two after his return from the Copper-mine River, and has ever since been considered by the Hudson's Bay Company as a post of considerable importance. Previous to that time, the natives carried their furs down to the shores of Hudson's Bay, or disposed of them nearer home to the French Canadian traders, who visited this part of the country as early as the year 1697.

The Cumberland House district, extending

about one hundred and fifty miles from east to west along the banks of the Saskatchawan, and about as far from north to south, comprehends, on a rough calculation, upwards of twenty thousand square miles, and is frequented at present by about one hundred and twenty Indian hunters. Of these a few have several wives, but the majority only one; and, as some are unmarried, we shall not err greatly in considering the number of married women as only slightly exceeding that of the hunters. The women marry very young, have a custom of suckling their children for several years, and are besides exposed constantly to fatigue and often to famine; hence they are not prolific, bearing upon an average not more than four children, of whom two may attain the age of puberty. Upon these data, the amount of each family may be stated at five, and the whole Indian population in the district at five hundred.

This is but a small population for such an extent of country, yet their mode of life occasionally subjects them to great privations. The winter of our residence at Cumberland House proved extremely severe to the Indians. The hooping-cough made its appearance amongst them in the autumn, and was followed by the measles, which in the course of the winter spread

through the tribe. Many died, and most of the survivors were so enfeebled as to be unable to pursue the necessary avocations of hunting and fishing. Even those who experienced only a slight attack, or escaped the sickness altogether, dispirited by the scenes of misery which enviroined them, were rendered incapable of affording relief to their distressed relations, and spent their time in conjuring and drumming to avert the pestilence. Those who were able came to the fort and received relief, but many who had retired with their families to distant corners, to pursue their winter hunts, experienced all the horrors of famine. One evening, early in the month of January, a poor Indian entered the North-West Company's House, carrying his only child in his arms, and followed by his starving wife. They had been hunting apart from the other bands, had been unsuccessful, and whilst in want were seized with the epidemical disease. An Indian is accustomed to starve, and it is not easy to elicit from him an account of his sufferings. This poor man's story was very brief; as soon as the fever abated, he set out with his wife for Cumberland House, having been previously reduced to feed on the bits of skin and offal, which remained about their encampment. Even this miserable fare was exhausted, and they

walked several days without eating, yet exerting themselves far beyond their strength that they might save the life of the infant. It died almost within sight of the house. Mr. Connolly, who was then in charge of the post, received them with the utmost humanity, and instantly placed food before them; but no language can describe the manner in which the miserable father dashed the morsel from his lips and deplored the loss of his child. Misery may harden a disposition naturally bad, but it never fails to soften the heart of a good man.

The *origin* of the Crees, to which nation the Cumberland House Indians belong, is, like that of the other Aborigines of America, involved in obscurity; but the researches now making into the nature and affinities of the languages spoken by the different Indian tribes, may eventually throw some light on the subject. Indeed, the American philologists seem to have succeeded already in classing the known dialects into three languages:—1st. The Floridean; spoken by the Creeks, Chickesaws, Choctaws, Cherokees, Pascagoulas, and some other tribes, who inhabit the southern parts of the United States. 2d. The Iroquois, spoken by the Mengwe, or Six Nations, the Wyandots, the Nadowessies, and Asseeneepoytuck. 3d. The Lenni-lenapè, spoken by a

great family more widely spread than the other two, and from which, together with a vast number of other tribes, are sprung our Crees. Mr. Heckewelder, a missionary, who resided long amongst these people, and from whose paper, (published in the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society,)* the above classification is taken, states that the Lenapè have a tradition amongst them, of their ancestors having come from the westward, and taken possession of the whole country from the Missouri to the Atlantic, after driving away or destroying the original inhabitants of the land, whom they termed Alligewi. In this migration and contest, which endured for a series of years, the Mengwe, or Iroquois, kept pace with them, moving in a parallel but more northerly line, and finally settling on the banks of the St. Lawrence, and the great lakes from whence it flows. The Lenapè, being more numerous, peopled not only the greater part of the country at present occupied by the United States, but also sent detachments to the northward as far as the banks of the River Mississippi and the shores of Hudson's Bay. The principal of their northern tribes are now known under the names of Saulteurs or Chippeways, and Crees; the former inhabiting the country betwixt Lakes Winipeg and Superior, the latter

frequenting the shores of Hudson's Bay, from Moose to Churchill, and the country from thence as far to the westward as the plains which lie betwixt the forks of the Saskatchawan.

These Crees, formerly known by the French Canadian traders under the appellation of Knisteneaux, generally designate themselves as Eithinyoowuc *(men)*, or, when they wish to discriminate themselves from the other Indian nations, as Nathehwy-withinyoowuc *(Southern-men)**.

* Much confusion has arisen from the great variety of names, applied without discrimination to the various tribes of Saulteurs and Crees. Heckewelder considers the Crees of Moose Factory to be a branch of that tribe of the Lenapè, which is named Minsi, or Wolf Tribe. He has been led to form this opinion, from the similarity of the name given to these people by Monsieur Jeremie, namely, Monsonies; but the truth is, that their real name is Mongsoa-eythinyoowuc, or Moose-deer Indians; hence the name of the factory and river on which it is built. The name Knisteneaux, Kristeneaux, or Killisteneaux, was anciently applied to a tribe of Crees, now termed Maskegons, who inhabit the river Winipeg. This small tribe still retains the peculiarities of customs and dress, for which it was remarkable many years ago, as mentioned by Mr. Henry, in the interesting account of his journeys in these countries. They are said to be great rascals. The great body of the Crees were at that time named Opimmitish Ininiwuc, or Men of the Woods. It would, however, be an endless task to attempt to determine the precise people designated by the early French writers. Every small band, naming itself from its hunting grounds, was described as a different nation. The Chippeways who frequented the Lake of the Woods were named from a particular act of pillage—Pilliers, or Robbers: and the name Saulteurs, applied to a principal band that frequented the Sault St. Marie, has been by degrees extended to the whole tribe. It is frequently pronounced and written *Sotoos*.

The original character of the Crees must have been much modified by their long intercourse with Europeans; hence it is to be understood, that we confine ourselves in the following sketch to their present condition, and more particularly to the Crees of Cumberland House. The moral character of a hunter is acted upon by the nature of the land he inhabits, the abundance or scarcity of food, and we may add, in the present case, his means of access to spirituous liquors. In a country so various in these respects as that inhabited by the Crees, the causes alluded to must operate strongly in producing a considerable difference of character amongst the various hordes. It may be proper to bear in mind also, that we are about to draw the character of a people whose only rule of conduct is public opinion, and to try them by a morality founded on divine revelation, the only standard that can be referred to by those who have been educated in a land to which the blessings of the Gospel have extended.

Bearing these considerations in mind then, we may state the Crees to be a vain, fickle, improvident, and indolent race, and not very strict in their adherence to truth, being great boasters; but, on the other hand, they strictly regard the rights of property*, are susceptible of the

* This is, perhaps, true of the Cumberland House Crees alone:

kinder affections, capable of friendship, very hospitable, tolerably kind to their women, and withal inclined to peace.

Much of the faulty part of their character, no doubt, originates in their mode of life; accustomed as a hunter to depend greatly on chance for his subsistence, the Cree takes little thought of to-morrow; and the most offensive part of his behaviour—the habit of boasting—has been probably assumed as a necessary part of his armour, which operates upon the fears of his enemies. They are countenanced, however, in this failing, by the practice of the ancient Greeks, and perhaps by that of every other nation in its ruder state. Every Cree fears the medical or conjuring powers of his neighbour; but at the same time exalts his own attainments to the skies. "I am God-like," is a common expression amongst them, and they prove their divinity-ship by eating live coals, and by various tricks of a similar nature. A medicine bag is an indispensable part of a hunter's equipment. It is generally furnished with a little bit of indigo, blue vitriol, vermilion, or some other showy article; and is, when in the hands of a noted conjurer, such an object of terror to the rest of the tribe, that its

many of the other tribes of Crees are stated by the traders to be thieves.

possessor is enabled to fatten at his ease upon the labours of his deluded countrymen.

A fellow of this description came to Cumberland House in the winter of 1819. Notwithstanding the then miserable state of the Indians, the rapacity of this wretch had been preying upon their necessities, and a poor hunter was actually at the moment pining away under the influence of his threats. The mighty conjurer, immediately on his arrival at the House, began to trumpet forth his powers, boasting, among other things, that although his hands and feet were tied as securely as possible, yet when placed in a conjuring-house, he would speedily disengage himself by the aid of two or three familiar spirits, who were attendant on his call. He was instantly taken at his word, and that his exertions might not be without an aim, a *capot* or great coat was promised as the reward of his success. A conjuring-house having been erected in the usual form, that is, by sticking four willows in the ground and tying their tops to a hoop at the height of six or eight feet, he was fettered completely by winding several fathoms of rope round his body and extremities, and placed in its narrow apartment, not exceeding two feet in diameter. A moose-skin being then thrown over the frame, secluded him from our view. He forth-

with began to chant a kind of hymn in a very monotonous tone. The rest of the Indians, who seemed in some doubt respecting the powers of a devil when put in competition with those of a white man, ranged themselves around and watched the result with anxiety. Nothing remarkable occurred for a long time. The conjurer continued his song at intervals, and it was occasionally taken up by those without. In this manner an hour and a half elapsed; but at length our attention, which had begun to flag, was roused by the violent shaking of the conjuring-house. It was instantly whispered round the circle, that at least one devil had crept under the moose-skin. But it proved to be only the "God-like man" trembling with cold. He had entered the lists, stript to the skin, and the thermometer stood very low that evening. His attempts were continued, however, with considerable resolution for half an hour longer, when he reluctantly gave in. He had found no difficulty in slipping through the noose when it was formed by his countrymen; but, in the present instance, the knot was tied by Governor Williams, who is an expert sailor. After this unsuccessful exhibition his credit sunk amazingly, and he took the earliest opportunity of sneaking away from the fort.

About two years ago a conjurer paid more

dearly for his temerity. In a quarrel with an Indian he threw out some obscure threats of vengeance which passed unnoticed at the time, but were afterwards remembered. They met in the spring at Carlton House, after passing the winter in different parts of the country, during which the Indian's child died. The conjurer had the folly to boast that he had caused its death, and the enraged father shot him dead on the spot. It may be remarked, however, that both these Indians were inhabitants of the plains, and had been taught, by their intercourse with the turbulent Stone Indians, to set but comparatively little value on the life of a man.

It might be thought that the Crees have benefited by their long intercourse with civilized nations. That this is not so much the case as it ought to be, is not entirely their own fault. They are capable of being, and I believe willing to be, taught; but no pains have hitherto been taken to inform their minds*, and their white acquaintances seem in general to find it easier to descend to the Indian customs, and

* Since these remarks were written the union of the rival companies has enabled the gentlemen, who have now the management of the fur trade, to take some decided steps for the religious instruction and improvement of the natives and half-breed Indians, which have been more particularly referred to in the introduction.

modes of thinking, particularly with respect to women, than to attempt to raise the Indians to theirs. Indeed such a lamentable want of morality has been displayed by the white traders in their contests for the interests of their respective companies, that it would require a long series of good conduct to efface from the minds of the native population the ideas they have formed of the white character. Notwithstanding the frequent violations of the rights of property they have witnessed, and but too often experienced, in their own persons, these savages, as they are termed, remain strictly honest. During their visits to a post, they are suffered to enter every apartment in the house, without the least restraint, and although articles of value to them are scattered about, nothing is ever missed. They scrupulously avoid moving any thing from its place, although they are often prompted by curiosity to examine it. In some cases, indeed, they carry this principle to a degree of self-denial which would hardly be expected. It often happens that meat, which has been paid for, (if the poisonous draught it procures them can be considered as payment,) is left at their lodges until a convenient opportunity occurs of carrying it away. They will rather pass several days with-

out eating than touch the meat thus intrusted to their charge, even when there exists a prospect of replacing it.

The hospitality of the Crees is unbounded. They afford a certain asylum to the half-breed children when deserted by their unnatural white fathers; and the infirm, and indeed every individual in an encampment, share the provisions of a successful hunter as long as they last. Fond too as a Cree is of spirituous liquors, he is not happy unless all his neighbours partake with him. It is not easy, however, to say what share ostentation may have in the apparent munificence in the latter article; for when an Indian, by a good hunt, is enabled to treat the others with a keg of rum, he becomes the chief of a night, assumes no little stateliness of manner, and is treated with deference by those who regale at his expense. Prompted also by the desire of gaining a *name*, they lavish away the articles they purchase at the trading posts, and are well satisfied if repaid in praise.

Gaming is not uncommon amongst the Crees of all the different districts, but it is pursued to greater lengths by those bands who frequent the plains, and who, from the ease with which they obtain food, have abundant leisure. The game most in use amongst them, termed *puckesann*, is

played with the stones of a species of *prunus* which, from this circumstance, they term *puckesann-meena*. The difficulty lies in guessing the number of stones which are tossed out of a small wooden dish, and the hunters will spend whole nights at the destructive sport, staking their most valuable articles, powder and shot.

It has been remarked by some writers that the aboriginal inhabitants of America are deficient in passion for the fair sex. This is by no means the case with the Crees; on the contrary, their practice of seducing each other's wives, proves the most fertile source of their quarrels. When the guilty pair are detected, the woman generally receives a severe beating, but the husband is, for the most part, afraid to reproach the male culprit until they get drunk together at the fort; then the remembrance of the offence is revived, a struggle ensues, and the affair is terminated by the loss of a few handfuls of hair. Some husbands, however, feel more deeply the injury done to their honour, and seek revenge even in their sober moments. In such cases it is not uncommon for the offended party to walk with great gravity up to the other, and deliberately seizing his gun, or some other article of value to break it before his face. The adulterer looks on in silence, afraid to make any attempt to save his property. In this respect,

indeed, the Indian character seems to differ from the European, that an Indian, instead of letting his anger increase with that of his antagonist, assumes the utmost coolness, lest he should push him to extremities.

Although adultery is sometimes punished amongst the Crees in the manner above described, yet it is no crime, provided the husband receives a valuable consideration for his wife's prostitution. Neither is chastity considered as a virtue in a female before marriage, that is, before she becomes the exclusive property of one hunter.

The Cree women are not in general treated harshly by their husbands, and possess considerable influence over them. They often eat, and even get drunk, in consort with the men; a considerable portion of the labour, however, falls to the lot of the wife. She makes the hut, cooks, dresses the skins, and for the most part, carries the heaviest load: but, when she is unable to perform her task, the husband does not consider it beneath his dignity to assist her. In illustration of this remark, I may quote the case of an Indian who visited the fort in winter. This poor man's wife had lost her feet by the frost, and he was compelled, not only to hunt, and do all the menial offices himself, but in winter to drag his wife

with their stock of furniture from one encampment to another. In the performance of this duty, as he could not keep pace with the rest of the tribe in their movements, he more than once nearly perished of hunger.

These Indians, however, capable as they are of behaving thus kindly, affect in their discourse to despise the softer sex, and on solemn occasions, will not suffer them to eat before them, or even come into their presence. In this they are countenanced by the white residents, most of whom have Indian or half-breed wives, but seem afraid of treating them with the tenderness or attention due to every female, lest they should themselves be despised by the Indians. At least, this is the only reason they assign for their neglect of those whom they make partners of their beds and mothers of their children.

Both sexes are fond of, and excessively indulgent to, their children. The father never punishes them, and if the mother, more hasty in her temper, sometimes bestows a blow or two on a troublesome child, her heart is instantly softened by the roar which follows, and she mingles her tears with those that streak the smoky face of her darling. It may be fairly said, then, that restraint or punishment forms no part of the educa-

tion of an Indian child, nor are they early trained to that command over their temper which they exhibit in after years.

The discourse of the parents is never restrained by the presence of their children, every transaction between the sexes being openly talked of before them.

The Crees having early obtained arms from the European traders, were enabled to make harassing inroads on the lands of their neighbours, and are known to have made war excursions as far to the westward as the Rocky Mountains, and to the northward as far as M'Kenzie's River; but their enemies being now as well armed as themselves, the case is much altered.

They shew great fortitude in the endurance of hunger, and the other evils incident to a hunter's life; but any unusual accident dispirits them at once, and they seldom venture to meet their enemies in open warfare, or to attack them even by surprise, unless with the advantage of superiority of numbers. Perhaps they are much deteriorated in this respect by their intercourse with Europeans. Their existence at present hangs upon the supplies of ammunition and clothing they receive from the traders, and they deeply feel their dependant situation. But their character has been still more debased by the passion

for spirituous liquors, so assiduously fostered among them. To obtain the noxious beverage, they descend to the most humiliating entreaties, and assume an abjectness of behaviour which does not seem natural to them, and of which not a vestige is to be seen in their intercourse with each other. Their character has sunk among the neighbouring nations. They are no longer the warriors who drove before them the inhabitants of the Saskatchawan, and Missinippi. The Cumberland House Crees, in particular, have been long disused to war. Betwixt them and their ancient enemies, the Slave nations, lie the extensive plains of Saskatchawan, inhabited by the powerful Asseeneepoytuck, or Stone Indians, who having whilst yet a small tribe entered the country under the patronage of the Crees, now render back the protection they received.

The manners and customs of the Crees have, probably since their acquaintance with Europeans, undergone a change, at least, equal to that which has taken place in their moral character; and, although we heard of many practices peculiar to them, yet they appeared to be nearly as much honoured in the breach as the observance. We shall however briefly notice a few of the most remarkable customs.

When a hunter marries his first wife, he usually

takes up his abode in the tent of his father-in-law, and of course hunts for the family; but when he becomes a father, the families are at liberty to separate, or remain together, as their inclinations prompt them. His second wife is for the most part the sister of the first, but not necessarily so, for an Indian of another family often presses his daughter upon a hunter whom he knows to be capable of maintaining her well. The first wife always remains the mistress of the tent, and assumes an authority over the others, which is not in every case quietly submitted to. It may be remarked, that whilst an Indian resides with his wife's family, it is extremely improper for his mother-in-law to speak, or even look at him; and when she has a communication to make, it is the etiquette that she should turn her back upon him, and address him only through the medium of a third person. This singular custom is not very creditable to the Indians, if it really had its origin in the cause which they at present assign for it, namely, that a woman's speaking to her son-in-law is a sure indication of her having conceived a criminal affection for him.

It appears also to have been an ancient practice for an Indian to avoid eating or sitting down in the presence of the father-in-law. We re-

ceived no account of the origin of this custom, and it is now almost obsolete amongst the Cumberland House Crees, though still partially observed by those who frequent Carlton.

Tattooing is almost universal with the Crees. The women are in general content with having one or two lines drawn from the corners of the mouth towards the angles of the lower jaw; but some of the men have their bodies covered with a great variety of lines and figures. It seems to be considered by most rather as a proof of courage than an ornament, the operation being very painful, and, if the figures are numerous and intricate, lasting several days. The lines on the face are formed by dexterously running an awl under the cuticle, and then drawing a cord, dipt in charcoal and water, through the canal thus formed. The punctures on the body are formed by needles of various sizes set in a frame. A number of hawk bells attached to this frame serve by their noise to cover the suppressed groans of the sufferer, and, probably for the same reason, the process is accompanied with singing. An indelible stain is produced by rubbing a little finely-powdered willow-charcoal into the punctures. A half-breed, whose arm I amputated, declared, that tattooing was not only the most

painful operation of the two, but rendered infinitely more difficult to bear by its tediousness, having lasted in his case three days.

A Cree woman, at certain periods, is laid under considerable restraint. They are far, however, from carrying matters to the extremities mentioned by Hearne in his description of the Chipewyans, or Northern Indians. She lives apart from her husband also for two months if she has borne a boy, and for three if she has given birth to a girl.

Many of the Cree hunters are careful to prevent a woman from partaking of the head of a moose-deer, lest it should spoil their future hunts; and for the same reason they avoid bringing it to a fort, fearing lest the white people should give the bones to the dogs.

The games or sports of the Crees are various. One termed the game of the mitten, is played with four balls, three of which are plain, and one marked. These being hid under as many mittens, the opposite party is required to fix on that which is marked. He gives or receives a feather according as he guesses right or wrong. When the feathers which are ten in number, have all passed into one hand, a new division is made; but when one of the parties obtains possession of them thrice, he seizes on the stakes.

The game of Platter is more intricate, and is played with the claws of a bear, or some other animal, marked with various lines and characters. These dice, which are eight in number, and cut flat at their large end, are shook together in a wooden dish, tossed into the air and caught again. The lines traced on such claws as happen to alight on the platter in an erect position, indicate what number of counters the caster is to receive from his opponent.

They have, however, a much more manly amusement termed the *Cross*, although they do not engage even in it without depositing considerable stakes. An extensive meadow is chosen for this sport, and the articles staked are tied to a post, or deposited in the custody of two old men. The combatants being stript and painted, and each provided with a kind of battledore or racket, in shape resembling the letter P, with a handle about two feet long and a head loosely wrought with net-work, so as to form a shallow bag, range themselves on different sides. A ball being now tossed up in the middle, each party endeavours to drive it to their respective goals, and much dexterity and agility is displayed in the contest. When a nimble runner gets the ball in his *cross*, he sets off towards the goal with the utmost speed, and is followed by the rest, who

endeavour to jostle him and shake it out; but, if hard pressed, he discharges it with a jerk, to be forwarded by his own party, or bandied back by their opponents, until the victory is decided by its passing the goal.

Of the religious opinions of the Crees, it is difficult to give a correct account, not only because they shew a disinclination to enter upon the subject, but because their ancient traditions are mingled with the information they have more recently obtained, by their intercourse with Europeans.

None of them ventured to describe the original formation of the world, but they all spoke of an universal deluge, caused by an attempt of the fish to drown Wœsack-ootchacht, a kind of demi-god, with whom they had quarrelled. Having constructed a raft, he embarked with his family and all kinds of birds and beasts. After the flood had continued for some time, he ordered several water-fowl to dive to the bottom; they were all drowned: but a musk-rat having been despatched on the same errand, was more successful, and returned with a mouthful of mud, out of which Wœsack-ootchacht, imitating the mode in which the rats construct their houses, formed a new earth. First, a small conical hill of mud appeared above the water; by-and-by

its base gradually spreading out, it became an extensive bank, which the rays of the sun at length hardened into firm land. Notwithstanding the power that Wœsack-ootchacht here displayed, his person is held in very little reverence by the Indians; and, in return, he seizes every opportunity of tormenting them. His conduct is far from being moral, and his amours, and the disguises he assumes in the prosecution of them, are more various and extraordinary than those of the Grecian Jupiter himself; but as his adventures are more remarkable for their eccentricity than their delicacy, it is better to pass them over in silence. Before we quit him, however, we may remark, that he converses with all kinds of birds and beasts in their own languages, constantly addressing them by the title of brother, but through an inherent suspicion of his intentions, they are seldom willing to admit of his claims of relationship. The Indians make no sacrifices to him, not even to avert his wrath. They pay a kind of worship, however, and make offerings to a being, whom they term *Kepoochikawn.*

This deity is represented sometimes by rude images of the human figure, but more commonly merely by tying the tops of a few willow bushes together; and the offerings to him consist of

every thing that is valuable to an Indian; yet they treat him with considerable familiarity, interlarding their most solemn speeches with expostulations and threats of neglect, if he fails in complying with their requests. As most of their petitions are for plenty of food, they do not trust entirely to the favour of Kepoochikawn, but endeavour, at the same time, to propitiate the *animal*, an imaginary representative of the whole race of larger quadrupeds that are objects of the chase.

In the month of May, whilst I was at Carlton House, the Cree hunter engaged to attend that post, resolved upon dedicating several articles to Kepoochikawn, and as I had made some inquiries of him respecting their modes of worship, he gave me an invitation to be present. The ceremony took place in a sweating-house, or as it may be designated from its more important use, a *temple*, which was erected for the occasion by the worshipper's two wives. It was framed of arched willows, interlaced so as to form a vault capable of containing ten or twelve men, ranged closely side by side, and high enough to admit of their sitting erect. It was very similar in shape to an oven or the kraal of a Hottentot, and was closely covered with moose skins, except at the east end, which was left open for a door.

Near the centre of the building there was a hole in the ground, which contained ten or twelve red-hot stones, having a few leaves of the *taccohay-menan*, a species of *prunus*, strewed around them. When the women had completed the preparations, the hunter made his appearance, perfectly naked, carrying in his hand an image of Kepoochikawn, rudely carved, and about two feet long. He placed his god at the upper end of the sweating-house, with his face towards the door, and proceeded to tie round its neck his offerings, consisting of a cotton handkerchief, a looking-glass, a tin pan, a piece of riband, and a bit of tobacco, which he had procured the same day, at the expense of fifteen or twenty skins. Whilst he was thus occupied, several other Crees, who were encamped in the neighbourhood, having been informed of what was going on, arrived, and stripping at the door of the temple, entered, and ranged themselves on each side; the hunter himself squatted down at the right hand of Kepoochikawn. The atmosphere of the temple having become so hot that none but zealous worshippers would venture in, the interpreter and myself sat down on the threshold, and the two women remained on the outside as attendants.

The hunter, who throughout officiated as high priest, commenced by making a speech to Ke-

poochikawn, in which he requested him to be propitious, told him of the value of the things now presented, and cautioned him against ingratitude. This oration was delivered in a monotonous tone, and with great rapidity of utterance, and the speaker retained his squatting posture, but turned his face to his god. At its conclusion, the priest began a hymn, of which the burthen was, "I will walk with God, I will go with the animal;" and, at the end of each stanza, the rest joined in an insignificant chorus. He next took up a calumet, filled with a mixture of tobacco and bear-berry leaves, and holding its stem by the middle, in a horizontal position, over the hot stones, turned it slowly in a circular manner, following the course of the sun. Its mouth-piece being then with much formality, held for a few seconds to the face of Kepoochikawn, it was next presented to the earth, having been previously turned a second time over the hot stones; and afterwards, with equal ceremony, pointed in succession to the four quarters of the sky; then drawing a few whiffs from the calumet himself, he handed it to his left-hand neighbour, by whom it was gravely passed round the circle; the interpreter and myself, who were seated at the door, were asked to partake in our turn, but requested to keep the head of the calumet within the thres-

hold of the sweating-house. When the tobacco was exhausted by passing several times round, the hunter made another speech, similar to the former; but was, if possible, still more urgent in his requests. A second hymn followed, and a quantity of water being sprinkled on the hot stones, the attendants were ordered to close the temple, which they did, by very carefully covering it up with moose skins. We had no means of ascertaining the temperature of the sweating-house; but before it was closed, not only those within, but also the spectators without, were perspiring freely. They continued in the vapour bath for thirty-five minutes, during which time a third speech was made, and a hymn was sung, and water occasionally sprinkled on the stones, which still retained much heat, as was evident from the hissing noise they made. The coverings were then thrown off, and the poor half-stewed worshippers exposed freely to the air; but they kept their squatting postures until a fourth speech was made, in which the deity was strongly reminded of the value of the gifts, and exhorted to take an early opportunity of shewing his gratitude. The ceremony concluded by the sweaters scampering down to the river, and plunging into the stream. It may be remarked, that the door of the temple, and, of course, the face of the god, was turned

to the rising sun; and the spectators were desired not to block up entirely the front of the building, but to leave a lane for the entrance or exit of some influence of which they could not give me a correct description. Several Indians, who lay on the outside of the sweating-house as spectators, seemed to regard the proceedings with very little awe, and were extremely free in the remarks and jokes they passed upon the condition of the sweaters, and even of Kepoochikawn himself. One of them made a remark, that the shawl would have been much better bestowed upon himself than upon Kepoochikawn, but the same fellow afterwards stripped and joined in the ceremony.

I did not learn that the Indians worship any other god by a specific name. They often refer, however, to the Keetchee-Maneeto, or Great Master of Life; and to an evil spirit, or Maatche-Maneeto. They also speak of Weettako, a kind of vampyre or devil, into which those who have fed on human flesh are transformed.

Whilst at Carlton, I took an opportunity of asking a communicative old Indian, of the Black-foot nation, his opinion of a future state; he replied, that they had heard from their fathers, that the souls of the departed have to scramble with great labour up the sides of a steep mountain,

upon attaining the summit of which they are rewarded with the prospect of an extensive plain, abounding in all sorts of game, and interspersed here and there with new tents, pitched in agreeble situations. Whilst they are absorbed in the contemplation of this delightful scene, they are descried by the inhabitants of the happy land, who, clothed in new skin-dresses, approach and welcome with every demonstration of kindness those Indians who have led good lives; but the bad Indians, who have imbrued their hands in the blood of their countrymen, are told to return from whence they came, and without more ceremony precipitated down the steep sides of the mountain.

Women, who have been guilty of infanticide, never reach the mountain at all, but are compelled to hover round the seats of their crimes, with branches of trees tied to their legs. The melancholy sounds, which are heard in the still summer evenings, and which the ignorance of the white people considers as the screams of the goat-sucker, are really, according to my informant, the moanings of these unhappy beings.

The Crees have somewhat similar notions, but as they inhabit a country widely different from the mountainous lands of the Blackfoot Indians, the difficulty of their journey lies in walking along

a slender and slippery tree, laid as a bridge across a rapid stream of stinking and muddy water. The night owl is regarded by the Crees with the same dread that it has been viewed by other nations. One small species, which is, known to them by its melancholy nocturnal hootings, (for as it never appears in the day, few even of the hunters have ever seen it,) is particularly ominous. They call it the *cheepai-peethees*, or death bird, and never fail to whistle when they hear its note. If it does not reply to the whistle by its hootings, the speedy death of the inquirer is augured.

When a Cree dies, that part of his property which he has not given away before his death, is burned with him, and his relations take care to place near the grave little heaps of fire-wood, food, pieces of tobacco, and such things as he is likely to need in his journey. Similar offerings are made when they revisit the grave, and as kettles, and other articles of value, are sometimes offered, they are frequently carried off by passengers, yet the relations are not displeased, provided sufficient respect has been shewn to the dead, by putting some other article, although of inferior value, in the place of that which has been taken away.

The Crees are wont to celebrate the returns of

the seasons by religious festivals; but we are unable to describe the ceremonial in use on these joyous occasions from personal observation. The following brief notice of a feast, which was given by an old Cree chief, according to his annual custom, on the first croaking of the frogs, is drawn up from the information of one of the guests. A large oblong tent, or lodge, was prepared for the important occasion, by the men of the party, none of the women being suffered to interfere. It faced the setting sun, and great care was taken that every thing about it should be as neat and clean as possible. Three fire-places were raised within it, at equal distances, and little holes were dug in the corners to contain the ashes of their pipes. In a recess, at its upper end, one large image of Kepoochikawn, and many smaller ones, were ranged with their faces towards the door. The food was prepared by the chief's wife, and consisted of *marrow* pemmican, berries boiled with fat, and various other delicacies that had been preserved for the occasion.

The preparations being completed, and a slave, whom the chief had taken in war, having warned the guests to the feast by the mysterious word *peenasheway*, they came, dressed out in their best garments, and ranged themselves according to their seniority, the elders seating themselves next

the chief at the upper end, and the young men near the door.

The chief commenced by addressing his deities in an appropriate speech, in which he told them, that he had hastened as soon as summer was indicated by the croaking of the frogs to solicit their favour for himself and his young men, and hoped that they would send him a pleasant and plentiful season. His oration was concluded by an invocation to all the animals in the land, and a signal being given to the slave at the door, he invited them severally by their names to come and partake of the feast.

The Cree chief having by this very general invitation displayed his unbounded hospitality; next ordered one of the young men to distribute a mess to each of the guests. This was done in new dishes of birch bark, and the utmost diligence was displayed in emptying them, it being considered extremely improper in a man to leave any part of that which is placed before him on such occasions. It is not inconsistent with good manners, however, but rather considered as a piece of politeness, that a guest who has been too liberally supplied, should hand the surplus to his neighbour. When the viands had disappeared, each filled his calumet and began to smoke with

great assiduity, and in the course of the evening several songs were sung to the responsive sounds of the drum, and seeseequay, their usual accompaniments.

The Cree drum is double-headed, but possessing very little depth, it strongly resembles a tambourine in shape. Its want of depth is compensated, however, by its diameter, which frequently exceeds three feet. It is covered with moose-skin parchment, painted with rude figures of men and beasts, having various fantastic additions, and is beat with a stick. The seeseequay is merely a rattle, formed by enclosing a few grains of shot in a piece of dried hide. These two instruments are used in all their religious ceremonies, except those which take place in a sweating-house.

A Cree places great reliance on his drum, and I cannot adduce a stronger instance than that of the poor man who is mentioned in a preceding page, as having lost his only child by famine, almost within sight of the fort. Notwithstanding his exhausted state, he travelled with an enormous drum tied to his back.

Many of the Crees make vows to abstain from particular kinds of food, either for a specific time, or for the remainder of their life, esteeming such

abstinence to be a certain means of acquiring some supernatural powers, or at least of entailing upon themselves a succession of good fortune.

One of the wives of the Carlton hunter, of whom we have already spoken as the worshipper of Kepoochikawn, made a determination not to eat of the flesh of the Wawaskeesh, or American stag; but during our abode at that place, she was induced to feed heartily upon it, through the intentional deceit of her husband, who told her that it was buffalo meat. When she had finished her meal, her husband told her of the trick, and seemed to enjoy the terror with which she contemplated the consequences of the involuntary breach of her vow. Vows of this nature are often made by a Cree before he joins a war party, and they sometimes, like the eastern bonzes, walk for a certain number of days on all fours, or impose upon themselves some other penance, equally ridiculous. By such means the Cree warrior becomes *godlike;* but unless he kills an enemy before his return, his newly-acquired powers are estimated to be productive in future of some direful consequence to himself.

As we did not witness any of the Cree dances ourselves, we shall merely mention, that like the other North American nations, they are accustomed to practise that amusement on meeting with

strange tribes, before going to war, and on other solemn occasions.

The habitual intoxication of the Cumberland House Crees has induced such a disregard of personal appearance, that they are squalid and dirty in the extreme; hence a minute description of their clothing would be by no means interesting. We shall, therefore, only remark in a general manner that the dress of the male consists of a blanket thrown over the shoulders, a leathern shirt or jacket, and a piece of cloth tied round the middle. The women have in addition a long petticoat; and both sexes wear a kind of wide hose, which reaching from the ankle to the middle of the thigh, are suspended by strings to the girdle. These hose, or as they are termed, *Indian stockings*, are commonly ornamented with beads or ribands, and from their convenience, have been universally adopted by the white residents, as an essential part of their winter clothing. Their shoes, or rather short boots, for they tie round the ankle, are made of soft dressed moose-skins, and during the winter they wrap several pieces of blanket round their feet.

They are fond of European articles of dress; considering it as mean to be dressed entirely in leather, and the hunters are generally furnished annually with a *capot* or great coat, and the

women with shawls, printed calicoes, and other things very unsuitable to their mode of life, but which they wear in imitation of the wives of the traders; all these articles, however showy they may be at first, are soon reduced to a very filthy condition by the Indian custom of greasing the face and hair with soft fat or marrow, instead of washing them with water. This practice they say preserves the skin soft, and protects it from cold in the winter, and the moschetoes in summer, but it renders their presence disagreeable to the olfactory organs of an European, particularly when they are seated in a close tent and near a hot fire.

The only peculiarity which we observed, in their mode of rearing children consists in the use of a sort of cradle, extremely well adapted to their mode of life. The infant is placed in the bag having its lower extremities wrapt up in soft sphagnum or bog-moss, and may be hung up in the tent, or to the branch of a tree, without the least danger of tumbling out; or in a journey suspended on the mother's back, by a band which crosses the forehead, so as to leave her hands perfectly free. It is one of the neatest articles of furniture they possess, being generally ornamented with beads, and bits of scarlet cloth, but

it bears a very strong resemblance in its form to a mummy case.

The sphagnum in which the child is laid, forms a soft elastic bed, which absorbs moisture very readily, and affords such a protection from the cold of a rigorous winter, that its place would be ill supplied by cloth.

The mothers are careful to collect a sufficient quantity in autumn for winter use; but when through accident their stock fails, they have recourse to the soft down of the typha, or reed mace, the dust of rotten wood, or even feathers, although none of these articles are so cleanly, or so easily changed as the sphagnum.

The above is a brief sketch of such parts of the manners, character and customs of the Crees, as we could collect from personal observation, or from the information of the most intelligent half-breeds we met with; and we shall merely add a few remarks on the manner in which the trade is conducted at the different inland posts of the Fur Companies.

The standard of Exchange in all mercantile transactions with the natives is a beaver skin, the relative value of which, as originally established by the traders, differs considerably from the present worth of the articles it represents; but the

Indians are averse to change. Three marten, eight musk-rat, or a single lynx, or wolverene skin, are equivalent to one beaver; a silver fox, white fox, or otter, are reckoned two beavers, and a black fox, or large black bear, are equal to four; a mode of reckoning which has very little connexion with the real value of these different furs in the European market. Neither has any attention been paid to the original cost of European articles, in fixing the tariff by which they are sold to the Indians. A coarse butcher's knife is one skin, a woollen blanket or a fathom of coarse cloth, eight, and a fowling-piece fifteen. The Indians receive their principal outfit of clothing and ammunition on credit in the autumn, to be repaid by their winter hunts; the amount intrusted to each of the hunters, varying with their reputations for industry and skill, from twenty to one hundred and fifty skins. The Indians are generally anxious to pay off the debt thus incurred, but their good intentions are often frustrated by the arts of the rival traders. Each of the Companies keeps men constantly employed travelling over the country during the winter, to collect the furs from the different bands of hunters as fast as they are procured. The poor Indian endeavours to behave honestly, and when he has gathered a few skins sends notice to the post from whence he procured

his supplies, but if discovered in the mean time by the opposite party, he is seldom proof against the temptation to which he is exposed. However firm he may be in his denials at first, his resolutions are enfeebled by the sight of a little rum, and when he has tasted the intoxicating beverage, they vanish like smoke, and he brings forth his store of furs, which he has carefully concealed from the scrutinizing eyes of his visitors. This mode of carrying on the trade not only causes the amount of furs, collected by either of the two Companies, to depend more upon the activity of their agents, the knowledge they possess of the motions of the Indians, and the quantity of rum they carry, than upon the liberality of the credits they give, but is also productive of an increasing deterioration of the character of the Indians, and will probably, ultimately prove destructive to the fur trade itself. Indeed the evil has already, in part, recoiled upon the traders; for the Indians, long deceived, have become deceivers in their turn, and not unfrequently after having incurred a heavy debt at one post, move off to another, to play the same game. In some cases the rival posts have entered into a mutual agreement, to trade only with the Indians they have respectively fitted out; but such treaties, being seldom rigidly adhered to, prove a fertile subject for disputes, and

the differences have been more than once decided by force of arms. To carry on the contest, the two Companies are obliged to employ a great many servants, whom they maintain often with much difficulty, and always at a considerable expense*.

There are thirty men belonging to the Hudson's Bay Fort at Cumberland, and nearly as many women and children.

The inhabitants of the North West Company's House are still more numerous. These large families are fed during the greatest part of the year on fish, which are principally procured at Beaver Lake, about fifty miles distant. The fishery commencing with the first frosts in autumn, continues abundant, till January, and the produce is dragged over the snow on sledges, each drawn by three dogs, and carrying about two hundred and fifty pounds. The journey to and from the lake occupies five days, and every sledge requires a driver. About three thousand fish, averaging three pounds a piece, were caught by the Hudson's Bay fishermen last season; in addition to which a few sturgeon were occasionally caught in Pine Island Lake; and towards the spring a considerable quantity of moose meat was procured from the Basquiau Hill, sixty or seventy miles distant. The rest of our winter's provision consisted of

* As the contending parties have united, the evils mentioned in this and the two preceding pages, are now, in all probability, at an end.

geese, salted in the autumn, and of dried meats and pemmican, obtained from the provision posts on the plains of the Saskatchawan. A good many potatoes are also raised at this post, and a small supply of tea and sugar is brought from the depôt at York Factory. The provisions obtained from these various sources were amply sufficient in the winter of 1819-20; but through improvidence this post has in former seasons been reduced to great straits.

Many of the labourers, and a great majority of the agents and clerks employed by the two Companies, have Indian or half-breed wives, and the mixed offspring thus produced has become extremely numerous.

These métifs, or as the Canadians term them, *bois brulés*, are upon the whole a good looking people, and where the experiment has been made, have shewn much aptness in learning, and willingness to be taught; they have, however, been sadly neglected. The example of their fathers has released them from the restraint imposed by the Indian opinions of good and bad behaviour; and generally speaking, no pains have been taken to fill the void with better principles. Hence it is not surprising that the males, trained up in a high opinion of the authority and rights of the Company to which their fathers belonged, and unacquainted with the laws of the civilized world,

should be ready to engage in any measure whatever, that they are prompted to believe will forward the interests of the cause they espouse. Nor that the girls, taught a certain degree of refinement by the acquisition of an European language, should be inflamed by the unrestrained discourse of their Indian relations, and very early give up all pretensions to chastity. It is, however, but justice to remark, that there is a very decided difference in the conduct of the children of the Orkney men employed by the Hudson's Bay Company and those of the Canadian voyagers. Some trouble is occasionally bestowed in teaching the former, and it is not thrown away; but all the good that can be said of the latter is, that they are not quite so licentious as their fathers are.

Many of the half-breeds, both male and female, are brought up amongst, and intermarry with, the Indians; and there are few tents wherein the paler children of such marriages are not to be seen. It has been remarked, I do not know with what truth, that half-breeds shew more personal courage than the pure Crees*.

* A singular change takes place in the physical constitution of the Indian females who become inmates of a fort; namely, they bear children more frequently and longer, but, at the same time, are rendered liable to indurations of the mammæ and prolapsus of the uterus; evils from which they are, in a great measure, exempt whilst they lead a wandering and laborious life.

The girls at the forts, particularly the daughters of Canadians, are given in marriage very young; they are very frequently wives at twelve years of age, and mothers at fourteen. Nay, more than once instance came under our observation of the master of a post having permitted a voyager to take to wife a poor child that had scarcely attained the age of ten years. The masters of posts and wintering partners of the Companies deemed this criminal indulgence to the vices of their servants, necessary to stimulate them to exertion for the interest of their respective concerns. Another practice may also be noticed, as shewing the state of moral feeling on these subjects amongst the white residents of the fur countries. It was not very uncommon, amongst the Canadian voyagers, for one woman to be common to, and maintained at the joint expense of, two men; nor for a voyager to sell his wife, either for a season or altogether, for a sum of money, proportioned to her beauty and good qualities, but always inferior to the price of a team of dogs.

The country around Cumberland House is flat and swampy, and is much intersected by small lakes. Limestone is found every where under a thin stratum of soil, and it not unfrequently shows itself above the surface. It lies in strata generally horizontal, but in one spot near the fort, dipping

to the northward at an angle of 40°. Some portions of this rock contain very perfect shells. With respect to the vegetable productions of the district the *populus trepida*, or aspen, which thrives in moist situations, is perhaps the most abundant tree on the banks of the Saskatchawan, and is much prized as fire-wood, burning well when cut green. The *populus balsamifera*, or taccamahac, called by the Crees *matheh meteos*, or ugly poplar, in allusion to its rough bark and naked stem, crowned in an aged state with a few distorted branches, is scarcely less plentiful. It is an inferior fire-wood, and does not burn well, unless when cut in the spring, and dried during the summer; but it affords a great quantity of potash. A decoction of its resinous buds has been sometimes used by the Indians with success in cases of *snow-blindness*, but its application to the inflamed eye produces much pain. Of pines, the white spruce is the most common here: the red and black spruce, the balsam of Gilead fir, and Banksian pine, also occur frequently. The larch is found only in swampy spots, and is stunted and unhealthy. The canoe birch attains a considerable size in this latitude, but from the great demand for its wood to make sledges, it has become rare. The alder abounds on the margin of the little grassy lakes, so common in the neighbour-

hood. A decoction of its inner bark is used as an emetic by the Indians, who also extract from it a yellow dye. A great variety of willows occur on the banks of the streams; and the hazel is met with sparingly in the woods. The sugar maple, elm, ash, and the *arbor vitæ* *, termed by the Canadian voyagers *cedar*, grow on various parts of the Saskatchawan; but that river seems to form their northern boundary. Two kinds of prunus also grow here, one of which †, a handsome small tree, produces a black fruit, having a very astringent taste, whence the term *choke-cherry* applied to it. The Crees call it *tawquoy-meena*, and esteemed it to be when dried and bruised a good addition to pemmican. The other species ‡ is a less elegant shrub, but is said to bear a bright red cherry, of a pleasant sweet taste. Its Cree name is *passee-awey-meenan*, and it is known to occur as far north as Great Slave Lake.

The most esteemed fruit of the country, however, is the produce of the *aronia ovalis*. Under the name of *meesasscootoomeena* it is a favourite dish at most of the Indian feasts, and mixed with pemmican, it renders that greasy food actually palatable. A great variety of currants and gooseberries are also mentioned by the natives, under the name

* Thuya occidentalis. † Prunus Virginiana.

‡ Prunus Pensylvanica.

of *sappoom-meena*, but we only found three species in the neighbourhood of Cumberland House. The strawberry, called by the Crees *otei-meena*, or heart-berry, is found in abundance, and rasps are common on the sandy banks of the rivers. The fruits hitherto mentioned fall in the autumn, but the following berries remained hanging on the bushes in the spring, and are considered as much mellowed by exposure to the colds in winter. The red whortleberry *(vaccinium vitis idea)* is found every where, but is most abundant in rocky places. It is aptly termed by the Crees *weesaw-gum-meena*, sour berry. The common cranberry *(oxycoccos palustris,)* is distinguished from the preceding by its growing on moist sphagnous spots, and is hence called *maskœgo-meena* swamp-berry. The American guelder rose, whose fruit so strongly resembles the cranberry, is also common. There are two kinds of it, *(viburnum oxycocoos*, and *edule,)* one termed by the natives *peepoon-meena*, winter-berry. and the other *mong-soa-meena*, moose-berry. There is also a berry of a bluish white colour, the produce of the white cornel tree, which is named *musqua-meena*, bear-berry, because these animals are said to fatten on it. The dwarf Canadian cornel, bears a corymb of red berries, which are highly ornamental to the woods throughout the country, but are not other-

wise worthy of notice, for they have an insipid farinaceous taste, and are seldom gathered.

The Crees extract some beautiful colours from several of their native vegetables. They dye their porcupine quills a beautiful scarlet, with the roots of two species of bed-straw (galium tinctorium, and boreale) which they indiscriminately term *sawoyan*. The roots, after being carefully washed are boiled gently in a clean copper kettle, and a quantity of the juice of the moose-berry, strawberry, cranberry, or arctic raspberry, is added together with a few red tufts of pistils of the larch. The porcupine quills are plunged into the liquor before it becomes quite cold, and are soon tinged of a beautiful scarlet. The process sometimes fails, and produces only a dirty brown, a circumstance which ought probably to be ascribed to the use of an undue quantity of acid. They dye black with an ink made of elder bark, and a little bog-iron-ore, dried and pounded, and they have various modes of producing yellow. The deepest colour is obtained from the dried root of a plant, which from their description appears to be the cow-bane *(cicuta virosa.)* An inferior colour is obtained from the bruised buds of the Dutch myrtle, and they have discovered methods of dyeing with various lichens.

The quadrupeds that are hunted for food in

this part of the country, are the moose and the rein-deer, the former termed by the Crees, *mongsoa*, or *moosoa*, the latter *attekh*. The buffalo or bison, (*moostoosh*,) the red-deer or American-stag, (*wawaskeeshoo*,) the *apeesee-mongsoos*, or jumping deer, the *kinwaithoos*, or long-tailed deer, and the *apistatchwkoos*, a species of antelope; animals that frequent the plains above the forks of the Saskatchawan, are not found in the neighbourhood of Cumberland House.

Of fur-bearing animals, various kinds of foxes (*makkeeshewuc*,) are found in the district, distinguished by the traders under the names of *black*, *silver*, *cross*, *red*, and *blue* foxes. The two former are considered by the Indians to be the same kind, varying accidentally in the colour of the pelt. The black foxes are very rare, and fetch a high price. The cross and red foxes differ from each other only in colour, being of the same shape and size. Their shades of colour are not disposed in any determinate manner, some individuals approaching in that respect very nearly to the silver fox, others exhibiting every link of the chain down to a nearly uniform deep or orange-yellow, the distinguishing colour of a pure red fox. It is reported both by Indians and traders, that all the varieties have been found in the same litter. The blue fox is seldom seen here, and is supposed to

come from the southward. The gray wolf *(mahaygan)* is common here. In the month of March the females frequently entice the domestic dog from the forts, although at other seasons a strong antipathy seemed to subsist between them. Some black wolves are occasionally seen. The black and red varieties of the American bear *(musquah)* are also found near Cumberland House, though not frequently; a black bear often has red cubs, and *vice versâ*. The grizzly bear, so much dreaded by the Indians for its strength and ferocity, inhabits a track of country nearer the Rocky Mountains. It is extraordinary that although I made inquiries extensively amongst the Indians, I met with but one who said that he had killed a she-bear with young in the womb.

The wolverene, in Cree *okeekoohawgees*, or *ommeethatsees*, is an animal of great strength and cunning, and is much hated by the hunters, on account of the mischief it does to their marten-traps. The Canadian lynx *(peeshew)* is a timid but well-armed animal, which preys upon the American hare. Its fur is esteemed. The marten *(wapeestan,)* is one of the most common furred animals in the country. The fisher, notwithstanding its name, is an inhabitant of the land, living like the common marten principally on mice. It is the *otchæk* of the Crees, and the *pekan*

of the Canadians. The mink, *(atjackash,)* has been often confounded by writers with the fisher. It is a much smaller animal, inhabits the banks of rivers, and swims well; its prey is fish. The otter, *(neekeek,)* is larger than the English species, and produces a much more valuable fur.

The musk rat *(watsuss*, or *musquash,)* is very abundant in all the small grassy lakes. They build small conical houses with a mixture of hay and earth; those which build early raising their houses on the mud of the marshes, and those which build later in the season founding their habitations upon the surface of the ice itself. The house covers a hole in the ice, which permits them to go into the water in search of the roots on which they feed. In severe winters when the small lakes are frozen to the bottom, and these animals cannot procure their usual food, they prey upon each other. In this way great numbers are destroyed.

The beaver *(ammisk)* furnish the staple fur of the country. Many surprising stories have been told of the sagacity with which this animal suits the form of its habitation, retreats, and dam, to local circumstances; and I compared the account of its manners, given by Cuvier, in his *Régne Animal,* with the reports of the Indians, and found them to agree exactly. They have

been often seen in the act of constructing their houses in the moon-light nights, and the observers agree, that the stones, wood, or other materials, are carried in their teeth, and generally leaning against the shoulder. When they have placed it to their mind, they turn round and give it a smart blow with their flat tail. In the act of diving they give a similar stroke to the surface of the water. They keep their provision of wood under water in front of the house. Their favourite food is the bark of the aspen, birch, and willow; they also eat the alder, but seldom touch any of the pine tribe unless from necessity; they are fond of the large roots of the *nuphar lutea*, and grow fat upon it, but it gives their flesh a strong rancid taste. In the season of love their call resembles a groan, that of the male being the hoarsest, but the voice of the young is exactly like the cry of a child. They are very playful, as the following anecdote will shew:—One day a gentleman, long resident in this country, espied five young beavers sporting in the water, leaping upon the trunk of a tree, pushing one another off, and playing a thousand interesting tricks. He approached softly under cover of the bushes, and prepared to fire on the unsuspecting creatures, but a nearer approach discovered to him such a similitude betwixt their gestures and the

infantile caresses of his own children, that he threw aside his gun. This gentleman's feelings are to be envied, but few traders in fur would have acted so feelingly. The musk-rat frequently inhabits the same lodge with the beaver, and the otter also thrusts himself in occasionally; the latter, however, is not always a civil guest, as he sometimes devours his host.

These are the animals most interesting in an economical point of view. The American hare, and several kinds of grouse and ptarmigan, also contribute towards the support of the natives; and the geese, in their periodical flights in the spring and autumn, likewise prove a valuable resource both to the Indians and white residents; but the principal article of food, after the moose-deer, is fish; indeed, it forms almost the sole support of the traders at some of the posts. The most esteemed fish is the Coregonus albus, the *attihhawmeg* of the Crees, and the *white-fish* of the Americans. Its usual weight is between three and four pounds, but it has been known to reach sixteen or eighteen pounds. Three fish of the ordinary size is the daily allowance to each man at the fort, and is considered as equivalent to two geese, or eight pounds of solid moose-meat. The fishery for the attihhawmeg lasts the whole year, but is most productive in the spawn-

ing season, from the middle of September to the middle of October. The *ottonneebees*, (Coregonus Artedi,) closely resembles the last. Three species of carp, (Catastomus Hudsonius, C. Forsterianus, and C. Lesueurii,) are also found abundantly in all the lakes, their Cree names are *namaypeeth*, *meethquawmaypeeth*, and *wapawhawkeeshew*. The *occow*, or river perch, termed also horn-fish, piccarel, or doré, is common, but is not so much esteemed as the attihhawmeg. It attains the length of twenty inches in these lakes. The methy is another common fish; it is the *gadus lota*, or burbot, of Europe. Its length is about two feet, its gullet is capacious, and it preys upon fish large enough to distend its body to nearly twice its proper size. It is never eaten, not even by the dogs unless through necessity, but its liver and roe are considered as delicacies.

The pike is also plentiful, and being readily caught in the winter-time with the hook, is so much prized on that account by the natives, as to receive from them the name of *eithinyoo-cannooshœoo*, or Indian fish. The common trout, or *pammœcous*, grows here to an enormous size, being caught in particular lakes, weighing upwards of sixty pounds; thirty pounds is no uncommon size at Beaver Lake, from whence Cumberland House is supplied. The Hioden

clodalis, *oweepeètcheesees*, or gold-eye is a beautiful small fish, which resembles the trout, in its habits.

One of the largest fish is the *mathemegh*, catfish, or *barbue*. It belongs to the genus *silurus*. It is rare but is highly prized as food.

The sturgeon (Accipenser ruthenus) is also taken in the Saskatchawan, and lakes communicating with it, and furnishes an excellent, but rather rich, article of food.

## CHAPTER IV.

Leave Cumberland House—Mode of Travelling in Winter—Arrival at Carlton House—Stone Indians—Visit to a Buffalo Pound—Goitres—Departure from Carlton House—Isle à la Crosse—Arrival at Fort Chipewyan.

1820. January 18. THIS day we set out from Cumberland House for Carlton House; but previously to detailing the events of the journey, it may be proper to describe the necessary equipments of a winter traveller in this region, which I cannot do better than by extracting the following brief, but accurate, account of it from Mr. Hood's journal:—

"A snow-shoe is made of two light bars of wood, fastened together at their extremities, and projected into curves by transverse bars. The side bars have been so shaped by a frame, and dried before a fire, that the front part of the shoe turns up, like the prow of a boat, and the part behind terminates in an acute angle; the spaces between the bars are filled up with a fine netting of leathern thongs, except that part behind the

main bar, which is occupied by the feet; the netting is there close and strong, and the foot is attached to the main bar by straps passing round the heel but only fixing the toes, so that the heel rises after each step, and the tail of the shoe is dragged on the snow. Between the main bar and another in front of it, a small space is left, permitting the toes to descend a little in the act of raising the heel to make the step forward, which prevents their extremities from chafing. The length of a snow-shoe is from four to six feet and the breadth one foot and a half, or one foot and three quarters, being adapted to the size of the wearer. The motion of walking in them is perfectly natural, for one shoe is level with the snow, when the edge of the other is passing over it. It is not easy to use them among bushes, without frequent overthrows; nor to rise afterwards without help. Each shoe weighs about two pounds when unclogged with snow. The northern Indian snow-shoes differ a little from those of the southern Indians, having a greater curvature on the outside of each shoe; one advantage of which is, that when the foot rises the over-balanced side descends and throws off the snow. All the superiority of European art has been unable to improve the native contrivance of this useful machine.

"Sledges are made of two or three flat boards, curving upwards in front, and fastened together by transverse pieces of wood above. They are so thin that, if heavily laden, they bend with the inequalities of the surface over which they pass. The ordinary dog-sledges are eight or ten feet long and very narrow, but the lading is secured to a lacing round the edges. The cariole used by the traders is merely a covering of leather for the lower part of the body, affixed to the common sledge, which is painted and ornamented according to the taste of the proprietor. Besides snow-shoes, each individual carries his blanket, hatchet, steel, flint, and tinder, and generally fire arms."

The general dress of the winter traveller, is a *capot*, having a hood to put up under the fur cap in windy weather, or in the woods, to keep the snow from his neck; leathern trowsers and Indian stockings which are closed at the ankles, round the upper part of his *mòcassins*, or Indian shoes, to prevent the snow from getting into them. Over these he wears a blanket, or leathern coat, which is secured by a belt round his waist, to which his fire-bag, knife, and hatchet are suspended.

Mr. Back and I were accompanied by the seaman, John Hepburn; we were provided with two carioles and two sledges; their drivers and

dogs being furnished in equal proportions by the two Companies. Fifteen days' provision so completely filled the sledges, that it was with difficulty we found room for a small sextant, one suit of clothes, and three changes of linen, together with our bedding. Notwithstanding we thus restricted ourselves, and even loaded the carioles with part of the luggage, instead of embarking in them ourselves, we did not set out without considerable grumbling from the voyagers of both Companies, respecting the overlading of their dogs. However, we left the matter to be settled by our friends at the fort, who were more conversant with winter travelling than ourselves. Indeed the loads appeared to us so great that we should have been inclined to listen to the complaints of the drivers. The weight usually placed upon a sledge, drawn by three dogs, cannot, at the commencement of a journey, be estimated at less than three hundred pounds, which, however, suffers a daily diminution from the consumption of provisions. The sledge itself weighs about thirty pounds. When the snow is hard frozen, or the track well trodden, the rate of travelling is about two miles and a half an hour, including rests, or about fifteen miles a day. If the snow be loose the speed is necessarily much less and the fatigue greater.

At eight in the morning of the 18th, we quitted the fort, and took leave of our hospitable friend, Governor Williams, whose kindness and attention I shall ever remember with gratitude. Dr. Richardson, Mr. Hood, and Mr. Connolly, accompanied us along the Saskatchawan until the snow became too deep for their walking without snow-shoes. We then parted from our associates, with sincere regret at the prospect of a long separation. Being accompanied by Mr. Mackenzie, of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was going to Isle à la Crosse, with four sledges under his charge, we formed quite a procession, keeping in an Indian file, on the track of the man who preceded the foremost dogs; but, as the snow was deep, we proceeded slowly on the surface of the river, which is about three hundred and fifty yards wide, for the distance of six miles, which we went this day. Its alluvial banks and islands are clothed with willows. At the place of our encampment we could scarcely find sufficent pine branches to floor "the hut," as the Orkney men term the place where travellers rest. Its preparation, however, consists only in clearing away the snow to the ground, and covering that space with pine branches, over which the party spread their blankets and coats, and sleep in warmth and comfort, by keeping a good fire at their feet,

without any other canopy than the heaven, even though the thermometer should be far below zero.

The arrival at the place of encampment gives immediate occupation to every one of the party; and it is not until the sleeping-place has been arranged, and a sufficiency of wood collected as fuel for the night, that the fire is allowed to be kindled. The dogs alone remain inactive during this busy scene, being kept harnessed to their burdens until the men have leisure to unstow the sledges, and hang upon the trees every species of provision out of their reach. We had ample experience, before morning, of the necessity of this precaution, as they contrived to steal a considerable part of our stores, almost from underneath Hepburn's head, notwithanding their having been well fed at supper.

This evening we found the mercury of our thermometer had sunk into the bulb, and was frozen. It rose again into the tube on being held to the fire, but quickly re-descended into the bulb on being removed into the air; we could not, therefore, ascertain by it the temperature of the atmosphere, either then or during our journey. The weather was perfectly clear.

*January* 19.—We arose this morning after the enjoyment of a sound and comfortable repose, and recommenced our journey at sunrise, but

made slow progress through the deep snow. The task of beating the track for the dogs was so very fatiguing, that each of the men took the lead in turn, for an hour and a half. The scenery of the banks of the river improved as we advanced to-day; some firs and poplars were intermixed with the willows. We passed through two creeks, formed by islands, and encamped on a pleasant spot on the north shore, having only made six miles and three quarters actual distance.

The next day we pursued our course along the river; the dogs had the greatest difficulty in dragging their heavy burdens through the snow. We halted to refresh them at the foot of Sturgeon River, and obtained the latitude 53° 51′ 41″ N. This is a small stream, which issues from a neighbouring lake. We encamped near to Musquito Point, having walked about nine miles. The termination of the day's journey was a great relief to me, who had been suffering during the greater part of it, in consequence of my feet having been galled by the snow-shoes; this, however, is an evil which few escape on their initiation to winter travelling. It excites no pity from the more experienced companions of the journey, who travel on as fast as they can, regardless of your pain.

Mr. Isbester, and an Orkney man, joined us

from Cumberland House, and brought some pemmican that we had left behind; a supply which was very seasonable after our recent loss. The general occupation of Mr. Isbester during the winter, is to follow or find out the Indians, and collect their furs, and his present journey will appear adventurous to persons accustomed to the certainty of travelling on a well-known road. He was going in search of a band of Indians, of whom no information had been received since last October, and his only guide for finding them was their promise to hunt in a certain quarter; but he looked at the jaunt with indifference, and calculated on meeting them in six or seven days, for which time only he had provision. Few persons in this country suffer more from want of food than those occasionally do who are employed on this service. They are furnished with a sufficiency of provision to serve until they reach the part where the Indians are expected to be; but it frequently occurs that, on their arrival at the spot, they have gone elsewhere, and that a recent fall of snow has hidden their track, in which case, the voyagers have to wander about in search of them; and it often happens, when they succeed in finding the Indians, that they are unprovided with meat. Mr. Isbester had been placed in this distressing situation only a few weeks ago, and passed four days

without either himself or his dogs tasting food. At length, when he had determined on killing one of the dogs to satisfy his hunger, he happily met with a beaten track, which led him to some Indian lodges, where he obtained food.

The morning of the 21st was cold, but pleasant for travelling. We left Mr. Isbester and his companion, and crossed the peninsula of Musquito Point, to avoid a detour of several miles which the river makes. Though we put up at an early hour, we gained eleven miles this day. Our encampment was at the lower extremity of Tobin's Falls. The snow being less deep on the rough ice which enclosed this rapid, we proceeded, on the 22d, at a quicker pace than usual, but at the expense of great suffering to Mr. Back, myself, and Hepburn, whose feet were much galled. After passing Tobin's Falls, the river expands to the breadth of five hundred yards, and its banks are well wooded with pines, poplars, birch, and willows. Many tracks of moose-deer and wolves were observed near the encampment.

On the 23d the sky was generally overcast, and there were several snow showers, We saw two wolves and some foxes cross the river in the course of the day, and passed many tracks of the moose and red-deer. Soon after we had encamped the snow fell heavily, which was an advan-

tage to us after we had retired to rest, by its affording an additional covering to our blankets. The next morning, at breakfast time, two men arrived from Carlton on their way to Cumberland. Having the benefit of their track, we were enabled, to our great joy, to march at a quick pace without snow-shoes. My only regret was, that the party proceeded too fast to allow of Mr. Back's halting occasionally, to note the bearings of the points, and delineate the course of the river*, without being left behind. As the provisions were getting short, I could not, therefore, with propriety, check the progress of the party; and, indeed, it appeared to me less necessary, as I understood the river had been carefully surveyed. In the afternoon, we had to resume the incumbrance of the snow-shoes, and to pass over a rugged part where the ice had been piled over a collection of stones. The tracks of animals were very abundant on the river, particularly near the remains of an old establishment, called the Lower Nippéween.

So much snow had fallen on the night of the 24th, that the track we intended to follow was completely covered, and our march to-day was very fatiguing. We passed the remains of two

* This was afterwards done by Dr. Richardson during a voyage to Carlton in the spring.

red-deer, lying at the bases of perpendicular cliffs, from the summits of which they had, probably, been forced by the wolves. These voracious animals who are inferior in speed to the moose or red-deer are said frequently to have recourse to this expedient in places where extensive plains are bounded by precipitous cliffs. Whilst the deer are quietly grazing, the wolves assemble in great numbers, and, forming a crescent, creep slowly towards the herd so as not to alarm them much at first, but when they perceive that they have fairly hemmed in the unsuspecting creatures, and cut off their retreat across the plain, they move more quickly and with hideous yells terrify their prey and urge them to flight by the only open way, which is that towards the precipice; appearing to know that when the herd is once at full speed, it is easily driven over the cliff, the rearmost urging on those that are before. The wolves then descend at their leisure, and feast on the mangled carcasses. One of these animals passed close to the person who was beating the track, but did not offer any violence. We encamped at sunset, after walking thirteen miles.

On the 26th, we were rejoiced at passing the half-way point, between Cumberland and Carlton. The scenery of the river is less pleasing

beyond this point, as there is a scarcity of wood. One of our men was despatched after a red-deer that appeared on the bank. He contrived to approach near enough to fire twice, though without success, before the animal moved away. After a fatiguing march of seventeen miles we put up at the upper Nippéween, a deserted establishment; and performed the comfortable operations of shaving and washing for the first time since our departure from Cumberland, the weather having been hitherto too severe. We passed an uncomfortable and sleepless night, and agreed next morning to encamp in future, in the open air, as preferable to the imperfect shelter of a deserted house without doors or windows.

The morning was extremely cold, but fortunately the wind was light, which prevented our feeling it severely; experience indeed had taught us that the sensation of cold depends less upon the state of temperature, than the force of the wind. An attempt was made to obtain the latitude, which failed, in consequence of the screw, that adjusts the telescope of the sextant, being immoveably fixed, from the moisture upon it having frozen. The instrument could not be replaced in its case before the ice was thawed by the fire in the evening.

In the course of the day we passed the confluence of the south branch of the Saskatchawan, which rises from the Rocky Mountains near the sources of the northern branch of the Missouri. At Coles Falls, which commence a short distance from the branch, we found the surface of the ice very uneven, and many spots of open water.

We passed the ruins of an establishment, which the traders had been compelled to abandon, in consequence of the intractible conduct and pilfering habits of the Assinéboine or Stone Indians; and we learned that all the residents at a post on the south branch, had been cut of by the same tribe some years ago. We travelled twelve miles to-day. The wolves serenaded us through the night with a chorus of their agreeable howling, but none of them ventured near the encampment. But Mr. Back's repose was disturbed by a more serious evil: his buffalo robe caught fire, and the shoes on his feet, being contracted by the heat, gave him such pain, that he jumped up in the cold, and ran into the snow as the only means of obtaining relief.

On the 28th we had a strong and piercing wind from N.W. in our faces, and much snow-drift; we were compelled to walk as quick as we could, and to keep constantly rubbing the exposed parts of the skin, to prevent their being

frozen, but some of the party suffered in spite of every precaution. We descried three red-deer on the banks of the river, and were about to send the best marksmen after them, when they espied the party, and ran away. A supply of meat would have been very seasonable, as the men's provision had become scanty, and the dogs were without food, except a little burnt leather. Owing to the scarcity of wood, we had to walk until a late hour, before a good spot for an encampment could be found, and had then attained only eleven miles. The night was miserably cold; our tea froze in the tin pots before we could drink it, and even a mixture of spirits and water became quite thick by congelation; yet, after we lay down to rest, we felt no inconvenience, and heeded not the wolves, though they were howling within view.

The 29th was also very cold, until the sun burst forth, when the travelling became pleasant. The banks of the river are very scantily supplied with wood through the part we passed to-day. A long track on the south shore, called Holms Plains, is destitute of any thing like a tree, and the opposite bank has only stunted willows; but, after walking sixteen miles, we came to a spot better wooded, and encamped opposite to a re-

markable place, called by the voyagers "The Neck of Land."

A short distance below our encampment, on the peninsula formed by the confluence of the Net-setting river with the Saskatchawan, there stands a representation of Kepoochikawn, which was formerly held in high veneration by the Indians, and is still looked upon with some respect. It is merely a large willow bush, having its tops bound into a bunch. Many offerings of value such as handsome dresses, hatchets, and kettles, used to be made to it, but of late its votaries have been less liberal. It was mentioned to us as a signal instance of its power, that a sacrilegious moose-deer having ventured to crop a few of its tender twigs was found dead at the distance of a few yards. The bush having now grown old and stunted is exempted from similar violations.

On the thirtieth we directed our course round The Neck of Land, which is well clothed with pines and firs; though the opposite or western bank is nearly destitute of wood. This contrast between the two banks continued until we reached the commencement of what our companions called the Barren Grounds, when both the banks were alike bare. Vast plains extend behind the southern bank, which afford excellent pas-

turage for the buffalo, and other grazing animals. In the evening we saw a herd of the former, but could not get near to them. After walking fifteen miles we encamped. The men's provision having been entirely expended last night, we shared our small stock with them. The poor dogs had been toiling some days on the most scanty fare; their rapacity, in consequence, was unbounded; they forced open a deal box, containing tea, *&c.*, to get at a small piece of meat which had been incautiously placed in it.

As soon as daylight permitted, the party commenced their march in expectation of reaching Carlton House to breakfast, but we did not arrive before noon, although the track was good. We were received by Mr. Prudens, the gentleman in charge of the post, with that friendly attention which Governor Williams's circular was calculated to ensure at every station; and were soon afterwards regaled with a substantial dish of buffalo steaks, which would have been excellent under any circumstances, but were particularly relished by us, after our travelling fare of dried meat and pemmican, though eaten without either bread or vegetables. After this repast, we had the comfort of changing our travelling dresses, which had been worn for four-

teen days; a gratification which can only be truly estimated by those who have been placed under similar circumstances. I was still in too great pain from swellings in the ankles to proceed to La Montée, the North-West Company's establishment, distant about three miles; but Mr. Hallet, the gentleman in charge, came the following morning, and I presented to him the circular from Mr. S. Mac Gillivray. He had already been furnished, however, with a copy of it from Mr. Connolly, and was quite prepared to assist us in our advance to the Athabasca.

Mr. Back and I having been very desirous to see some of the Stone Indians, who reside on the plains in this vicinity, learned with regret that a large band of them had left the house on the preceding day; but our curiosity was amply gratified by the appearance of some individuals, on the following and every subsequent day during our stay.

The looks of these people would have prepossessed me in their favour, but for the assurances I had received from the gentlemen of the posts, of their gross and habitual treachery. Their countenances are affable and pleasing, their eyes large and expressive, nose aquiline, teeth white and regular, the forehead bold, the cheek-bones rather high. Their figure is usually good, above

the middle size, with slender, but well proportioned, limbs. Their colour is a light copper, and they have a profusion of very black hair, which hangs over the ears, and shades the face. Their dress, which I think extremely neat and convenient, consists of a vest and trowsers of leather fitted to the body; over these a buffalo robe is thrown gracefully. These dresses are in general cleaned with *white-mud*, a sort of marl, though some use *red earth*, a kind of bog-iron-ore; but this colour neither looks so light, nor forms such an agreeable contrast as the white with the black hair of the robe. Their quiver hangs behind them, and in the hand is carried the bow, with an arrow always ready for attack or defence, and sometimes they have a gun; they also carry a bag containing materials for making a fire, some tobacco, the calumet or pipe, and whatever valuables they possess. This bag is neatly ornamented with porcupine quills. Thus equipped, the Stone Indian bears himself with an air of perfect independence.

The only articles of European commerce they require in exchange for the meat they furnish to the trading post, are tobacco, knives, ammunition, and spirits, and occasionally some beads, but more frequently buttons, which they string in their hair as ornaments. A successful hunter will

probably have two or three dozen of them hanging at equal distances on locks of hair, from each side of the forehead. At the end of these locks, small coral bells are sometimes attached, which tingle at every motion of the head, a noise which seems greatly to delight the wearer; sometimes strings of buttons are bound round the head like a tiara; and a bunch of feathers gracefully crowns the head.

The Stone Indians steal whatever they can, particularly horses; these animals they maintain are common property, sent by the Almighty for the general use of man, and therefore may be taken wherever met with; still they admit the right of the owners to watch them, and to prevent theft if possible. This avowed disposition on their part calls forth the strictest vigilance at the different posts; notwithstanding which the most daring attacks are often made with success, sometimes on parties of three or four, but oftener on individuals. About two years ago a band of them had the audacity to attempt to take away some horses which were grazing before the gate of the N.W. Company's fort; and, after braving the fire from the few people then at the establishment through the whole day, and returning their shots occasionally, they actually succeeded in their enterprise. One man was killed on each

side. They usually strip defenceless persons whom they meet of all their garments, but particularly of those which have buttons, and leave them to travel home in that state, however severe the weather. If resistance be expected, they not unfrequently murder before they attempt to rob. The traders, when they travel, invariably keep some men on guard to prevent surprise, whilst the others sleep; and often practise the stratagem of lighting a fire at sunset, which they leave burning, and move on after dark to a more distant encampment—yet these precautions do not always baffle the depredators. Such is the description of men whom the traders of this river have constantly to guard against. It must require a long residence among them, and much experience of their manners, to overcome the apprehensions their hostility and threats are calculated to excite. Through fear of having their provision and supplies entirely cut off, the traders are often obliged to overlook the grossest offences, even murder, thuogh the delinquents present themselves with unblushing effrontry almost immediately after the fact, and perhaps boast of it. They do not, on detection, consider themselves under any obligation to deliver up what they have stolen without receiving an equivalent.

The Stone Indians keep in amity with their neighbours the Crees from motives of interest; and the two tribes unite in determined hostility against the nations dwelling to the westward, which are generally called Slave Indians—a term of reproach applied by the Crees to those tribes against whom they have waged successful wars. The Slave Indians are said greatly to resemble the Stone Indians, being equally desperate and daring in their acts of aggression and dishonesty towards the traders.

These parties go to war almost every summer, and sometimes muster three or four hundred horsemen on each side. Their leaders, in approaching the foe, exercise all the caution of the most skilful generals; and whenever either party considers that it has gained the best ground, or finds it can surprise the other, the attack is made. They advance at once to close quarters, and the slaughter is consequently great, though the battle may be short. The prisoners of either sex are seldom spared, but slain on the spot with wanton cruelty. The dead are scalped, and he is considered the bravest person who bears the greatest number of scalps from the field. These are afterwards attached to his war dress, and worn as proofs of his prowess. The victorious party, during a certain time, blacken their faces and

every part of their dress in token of joy, and in that state they often come to the establishment, if near, to testify their delight by dancing and singing, bearing all the horrid insignia of war, to display their individual feats. When in mourning, they completely cover their dress and hair with white mud.

The Crees in the vicinity of Carlton House have the same cast of countenance as those about Cumberland, but are much superior to them in appearance, living in a more abundant country. These men are more docile, tractable, and industrious, than the Stone Indians, and bring greater supplies of provision and furs to the posts. Their general mode of dress resembles that of the Stone Indians; but sometimes they wear cloth leggins, blankets, and other useful articles, when they can afford to purchase them. They also decorate their hair with buttons.

The Crees procure guns from the traders, and use them in preference to the bow and arrow; and from them the Stone Indians often get supplied, either by stealth, gaming, or traffic. Like the rest of their nation, these Crees are remarkably fond of spirits, and would make any sacrifice to obtain them. I regretted to find the demand for this pernicious article had greatly increased

within the few last years. The following notice of these Indians is extracted from Dr. Richardson's journal:

"The Asseenaboine, termed by the Crees Asseeneepoytuck, or Stone Indians, are a tribe of Sioux, who speak a dialect of the Iroquois, one of the great divisions under which the American philologists have classed the known dialects of the Aborigines of North America. The Stone Indians, or, as they name themselves, *Eascab*, originally entered this part of the country under the protection of the Crees, and in concert with them attacked and drove to the westward the former inhabitants of the banks of the Saskatchawan. They are still the allies of the Crees, but have now become more numerous than their former protectors. They exhibit all the bad qualities ascribed to the Mengwe or Iroquois, the stock whence they are sprung. Of their actual number I could obtain no precise information, but it is very great. The Crees who inhabit the plains, being fur hunters, are better known to the traders.

"They are divided into two distinct bands, the Ammisk-watcheéthinyoowuc or Beaver Hill Crees, who have about forty tents, and the Sackawee-thinyoowuc, or Thick Wood Crees, who have thirty-five. The tents average nearly ten inmates

each, which gives a population of seven hundred and fifty to the whole.

"The nations who were driven to the westward by the Eascab and Crees are termed, in general, by the latter, Yatcheé-thinyoowuc, which has been translated Slave Indians, but more properly signifies Strangers.

"They now inhabit the country around Fort Augustus, and towards the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and have increased in strength until they have become an object of terror to the Eascab themselves. They rear a great number of horses, make use of fire-arms, and are fond of European articles; in order to purchase which they hunt the beaver and other furred animals, but they depend principally on the buffalo for subsistence.

"They are divided into five nations:—First, the Pawäustic-eythin-yoowuc, or Fall Indians, so named from their former residence on the falls of the Saskatchawan. They are the Minetarres, with whom Captain Lewis's party had a conflict on their return from the Missouri. They have about four hundred and fifty or five hundred tents; their language is very guttural and difficult.

"Second, the Peganoo-eythinyoowuc Pegans, or Muddy River Indians, named in their own language Peganœ'-koon, have four hundred tents,

"Third, the Meethco-thinyoowuc, or Blood Indians, named by themselves Kainœ'-koon, have three hundred tents.

"Fourth, the Cuskœteh-waw-thésseetuck, or Blackfoot Indians, in their own language Saxœ-kœ-koon, have three hundred and fifty tents.

"The last three nations, or tribes, the Pegans, Blood Indians, and Black-feet speak the same language. It is pronounced in a slow and distinct tone, has much softness, and is easily acquired by their neighbours. I am assured by the best interpreters in the country, that it bears no affinity to the Cree, Sioux, or Chipewyan languages.

"Lastly, the Sassees, or Circees, have one hundred and fifty tents; they speak the same language with their neighbours, the Snare Indians, who are a tribe of the extensive family of the Chipewyans*."

On the 6th of February, we accompanied Mr. Prudens on a visit to a Cree encampment and a buffalo pound, about six miles from the house;

* "As the subjects may be interesting to philologists, I subjoin a few words of the Blackfoot language:—

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|---|---|---|---|
| Poestâh kan, | tobacco. | Stoo-an, | a knife. |
| Moohksee, | an awl. | Sassoopats, | ammunition. |
| Nappœ-oòhkee, | rum. | Meenee, | beads. |
| Cook keet, | give me. | Poommees, | fat. |
| Eenince, | buffalo. | Miss ta poot, | kcép off. |
| Pooxápoot | come here. | Saw, | no. |
| Kat œtsits, | none, I have none | Stwee, | cold; it is cold. |
| Keet stâ kee, | a beaver. | Pennákōuit, | a horse. |
| Naum', | a bow. | Ahseeu, | good." |

we found seven tents pitched within a small cluster of pines, which adjoined the pound. The largest, which we entered, belonged to the Chief, who was absent, but came in on learning our arrival. The old man (about sixty) welcomed us with a hearty shake of the hand, and the customary salutation of "What cheer!" an expression which they have gained from the traders. As we had been expected, they had caused the tent to be neatly arranged, fresh grass was spread on the ground, buffalo robes were placed on the side opposite the door for us to sit on, and a kettle was on the fire to boil meat for us.

After a few minutes' conversation, an invitation was given to the Chief and his hunters to smoke the calumet with us, as a token of our friendship: this was loudly announced through the camp, and ten men from the other tents immediately joined our party. On their entrance the women and children withdrew, their presence on such occasions being contrary to etiquette. The calumet having been prepared and lighted by Mr. Prudens's clerk, was presented to the Chief, who performed the following ceremony before he commenced smoking:—He first pointed the stem to the south, then to the west, north,

and east, and afterwards to the heavens, the earth, and the fire, as an offering to the presiding spirits;—he took three whiffs only, and then passed the pipe to his next companion, who took the same number of whiffs, and so did each person as it went round. After the calumet had been replenished, the person who then commenced repeated only the latter part of the ceremony, pointing the stem to the heaven, the earth, and the fire. Some spirits, mixed with water, were presented to the old man, who, before he drank, demanded a feather, which he dipped into the cup several times, and sprinkled the moisture on the ground, pronouncing each time a prayer. His first address to the Keetchee Manitou, or Great Spirit, was, that buffalo might be abundant every where, and that plenty might come into their pound. He next prayed, that the other animals might be numerous, and particularly those which were valuable for their furs, and then implored that the party present might escape the sickness which was at that time prevalent, and be blessed with constant health. Some other supplications followed, which we could not get interpreted without interrupting the whole proceeding; but at every close, the whole Indian party assented by exclaiming Aha; and when he had

finished, the old man drank a little and passed the cup round. After these ceremonies each person smoked at his leisure, and they engaged in a general conversation, which I regretted not understanding, as it seemed to be very humorous, exciting frequent bursts of laughter. The younger men, in particular, appeared to ridicule the abstinence of one of the party, who neither dranked nor smoked. He bore their jeering with perfect composure, and assured them, as I was told, they would be better if they would follow his example. I was happy to learn from Mr. Prudens, that this man was not only one of the best hunters, but the most cheerful and contented of the tribe.

Four Stone Indians arrived at this time and were invited into the tent, but one only accepted the invitation and partook of the fare. When Mr. Prudens heard the others refuse, he gave immediate directions that our horses should be narrowly watched, as he suspected these fellows wished to carry them off. Having learned that these Crees considered Mr. Back and myself to be war chiefs, possessing great power, and that they expected we should make some address to them, I desired them to be kind to the traders, to be industrious in procuring them provision and furs, and to refrain from stealing their stores and

horses; and I assured them, that if I heard of their continuing to behave kindly, I would mention their good conduct in the strongest terms to their Great Father across the sea, (by which appellation they designate the King,) whose favourable consideration they had been taught by the traders to value most highly.

They all promised to follow my advice, and assured me it was not they, but the Stone Indians, who robbed and annoyed the traders. The Stone Indian who was present, heard this accusation against his tribe quite unmoved, but he probably did not understand the whole of the communication. We left them to finish their rum, and went to look round the lodges, and examine the pound.

The greatest proportion of labour, in savage life, falls to the women; we now saw them employed in dressing skins, and conveying wood, water, and provision. As they have often to fetch the meat from some distance, they are assisted in this duty by their dogs, which are not harnessed in sledges, but carry their burthens in a manner peculiarly adapted to this level country. Two long poles are fastened by a collar to the dog's neck; their ends trail on the ground, and are kept at a proper distance by a hoop, which is lashed between them, immediately be-

hind the dog's tail; the hoop is covered with network, upon which the load is placed.

The boys were amusing themselves by shooting arrows at a mark, and thus training to become hunters. The Stone Indians are so expert with the bow and arrow, that they can strike a very small object at a considerable distance, and will shoot with sufficient force to pierce through the body of a buffalo when near.

The buffalo pound was a fenced circular space of about a hundred yards in diameter; the entrance was banked up with snow, to a sufficient height to prevent the retreat of the animals that once have entered. For about a mile on each side of the road leading to the pound, stakes were driven into the ground at nearly equal distances of about twenty yards; these were intended to represent men, and to deter the animals from attempting to break out on either side. Within fifty or sixty yards from the pound, branches of trees were placed between these stakes to screen the Indians, who lie down behind them to await the approach of the buffalo.

The principal dexterity in this species of chase is shewn by the horsemen, who have to manœuvre round the herd in the plains so as to urge them to enter the roadway, which is about a quarter of

a mile broad. When this has been accomplished, they raise loud shouts, and, pressing close upon the animals, so terrify them that they rush heedlessly forward towards the snare. When they have advanced as far as the men who are lying in ambush, they also rise, and increase the consternation by violent shouting and firing guns. The affrighted beasts having no alternative, run directly to the pound, where they are quickly despatched, either with an arrow or gun.

There was a tree in the centre of the pound, on which the Indians had hung strips of buffalo flesh and pieces of cloth as tributary or grateful offerings to the Great Master of Life; and we were told that they occasionally place a man in the tree to sing to the presiding spirit as the buffaloes are advancing, who must keep his station until the whole that have entered are killed. This species of hunting is very similar to that of taking elephants on the Island of Ceylon, but upon a smaller scale.

The Crees complained to us of the audacity of a party of Stone Indians, who, two nights before, had stripped their revered tree of many of its offerings, and had injured their pound by setting their stakes out of the proper places.

Other modes of killing the buffalo are practised

by the Indians with success; of these the hunting them on horseback requires most dexterity. An expert hunter, when well mounted, dashes at the herd, and chooses an individual which he endeavours to separate from the rest. If he succeeds, he contrives to keep him apart by the proper management of his horse, though going at full speed. Whenever he can get sufficiently near for a ball to penetrate the beast's hide, he fires, and seldom fails of bringing the animal down; though of course he cannot rest the piece against the shoulder, nor take a deliberate aim. On this service the hunter is often exposed to considerable danger, from the fall of his horse in the numerous holes which the badgers make in these plains, and also from the rage of the buffalo, which, when closely pressed, often turns suddenly, and, rushing furiously on the horse, frequently succeeds in wounding it, or dismounting the rider. Whenever the animal shews this disposition, which the experienced hunter will readily perceive, he immediately pulls up his horse, and goes off in another direction.

When the buffaloes are on their guard, horses cannot be used in approaching them; but the hunter dismounts at some distance, and crawls in the snow towards the herd, pushing his gun before him. If the buffaloes happen to look towards

him, he stops, and keeps quite motionless, until their eyes are turned in another direction; by this cautious proceeding a skilful person will get so near as to be able to kill two or three out of the herd. It will easily be imagined this service cannot be very agreeable when the thermometer stands 30° or 40° below zero, as sometimes happens in this country.

As we were returning from the tents, the dogs that were harnessed to three sledges, in one of which Mr. Back was seated, set off in pursuit of a buffalo-calf. Mr. Back was speedily thrown from his vehicle, and had to join me in my horse-cariole. Mr. Heriot, having gone to recover the dogs, found them lying exhausted beside the calf, which they had baited until it was as exhausted as themselves. Mr. Heriot, to shew us the mode of hunting on horseback, or, as the traders term it, running of the buffalo, went in chase of a cow, and killed it after firing three shots.

The buffalo is a huge and shapeless animal, quite devoid of grace or beauty; particularly awkward in running, but by no means slow; when put to his speed, he plunges through the deep snow very expeditiously; the hair is dark brown, very shaggy, curling about the head, neck, and humps, and almost covering the eye, particu-

larly in the bull, which is larger and more unsightly than the cow. The most esteemed part of the animal is the hump, called by the Canadians *bos*, by the Hudson's Bay people the *wig;* it is merely a strong muscle, on which nature at certain seasons forms a considerable quantity of fat. It is attached to the long spinous processes of the first dorsal vertebræ, and seems to be destined to support the enormous head of the animal. The meat which covers the spinal processes themselves, after the wig is removed, is next in esteem for its flavour and juiciness, and is more exclusively termed the hump by the hunters.

The party was prevented from visiting a Stone Indian encampment by a heavy fall of snow, which made it impracticable to go and return the same day. We were dissuaded from sleeping at their tents by the interpreter at the N.W. post, who told us they considered the hooping-cough and measles, under which they were now suffering, to have been introduced by some white people recently arrived in the country, and that he feared those who had lost relatives, imagining we were the persons, might vent their revenge on us. We regretted to learn that these diseases had been so very destructive among the tribes along the Saskatchawan, as to have carried off about three hundred persons, Crees and Assee-

naboines, within the trading circle of these establishments. The interpreter also informed us of another bad trait peculiar to the Stone Indians. Though they receive a visitor kindly at their tents, and treat him very hospitably during his stay, yet it is very probable they will despatch some young men to way-lay and rob him in going towards the post: indeed, all the traders assured us it was more necessary to be vigilantly on our guard on the occasion of a visit to them, than at any other time.

Carlton House, (which our observations place in latitude 52° 50′ 47″ N., longitude, 106° 12′ 42″ W., variation 20° 44′ 47″ E.) is pleasantly situated about a quarter of a mile from the river's side on the flat ground under the shelter of the high banks that bound the plains. The land is fertile, and produces, with little trouble, ample returns of wheat, barley, oats, and potatoes. The ground is prepared for the reception of these vegetables, about the middle of April, and when Dr. Richardson visited this place on May 10th, the blade of wheat looked strong and healthy. There were only five acres in cultivation at the period of my visit. The prospect from the fort must be pretty in summer, owing to the luxuriant verdure of this fertile soil; but in the uniform and cheerless garb of winter, it has little to gratify the eye.

Beyond the steep bank behind the house, commences the vast plain, whose boundaries are but imperfectly known; it extends along the south branch of the Saskatchawan, and towards the sources of the Missouri, and Asseenaboine Rivers, being scarcely interrupted through the whole of this great space by hills, or even rising grounds. The excellent pasturage furnishes food in abundance, to a variety of grazing animals, of which the buffalo, red-deer, and a species of antelope, are the most important. Their presence naturally attracts great hordes of wolves, which are of two kinds, the large, and the small. Many bears prowl about the banks of this river in summer; of these the grizzle bear is the most ferocious, and is held in dread both by Indians and Europeans. The traveller, in crossing these plains, not only suffers from the want of food and water, but is also exposed to hazard from his horse stumbling in the numerous badger-holes. In many large districts, the only fuel is the dried dung of the buffalo; and when a thirsty traveller reaches a spring, he has not unfrequently the mortification to find the water salt.

Carlton House, and La Montée, are provision-posts, only an inconsiderable quantity of furs being obtained at either of them. The provisions are procured in the winter season from the Indians,

in the form of dried meat and fat, and when converted by mixture into pemmican, furnish the principal support of the voyagers, in their passages to and from the depôts in summer. A considerable quantity of it is also kept for winter use, at most of the fur-posts, as the least bulky article that can be taken on a winter journey. The mode of making pemmican is very simple, the meat is dried by the Indians in the sun, or over a fire, and pounded by beating it with stones when spread on a skin. In this state it is brought to the forts, where the admixture of hair is partially sifted out, and a third part of melted fat incorporated with it, partly by turning the two over with a wooden shovel, partly by kneading them together with the hands. The pemmican is then firmly pressed into leathern bags, each capable of containing eighty-five pounds, and being placed in an airy place to cool, is fit for use. It keeps in this state, if not allowed to get wet, very well for one year, and with great care it may be preserved good for two. Between three and four hundred bags were made here by each of the Companies this year.

There were eight men, besides Mr. Prudens and his clerk, belonging to Carlton House. At La Montée there were seventy Canadians and

half-breeds, and sixty women and children, who consumed upwards of seven hundred pounds o buffalo meat daily, the allowance per diem for each man being eight pounds: a portion not so extravagant as may at first appear, when allowance is made for bone, and the entire want of farinaceous food or vegetables.

There are other provision posts, Fort Augustus and Edmonton farther up the river, from whence some furs are also procured. The Stone Indians have threatened to cut off the supplies in going up to these establishments, to prevent their enemies from obtaining ammunition, and other European articles ; but as these menaces have been frequently made without being put in excution, the traders now hear them without any great alarm, though they take every precaution to prevent being surprised. Mr. Back and I were present when an old Cree communicated to Mr. Prudens, that the Indians spoke of killing all the white people in that vicinity this year, which information he received with perfect composure, and was amused, as well as ourselves, with the man's judicious remark which immediately followed, "A pretty state we shall then be in without the goods you bring us."

The following remarks on a well-known disease are extracted from Dr. Richardson's Journal:—

"Bronchocele, or Goitre, is a common disorder

at Edmonton. I examined several of the individuals afflicted with it, and endeavoured to obtain every information on the subject from the most authentic sources. The following facts may be depended upon. The disorder attacks those only who drink the water of the river. It is indeed in its worst state confined almost entirely to the half-breed women and children, who reside constantly at the fort, and make use of river water, drawn in the winter through a hole cut in the ice. The men, being often from home on journeys through the plain, when their drink is melted snow, are less affected; and, if any of them exhibit during the winter, some incipient symptoms of the complaint, the annual summer voyage to the sea-coast generally effects a cure. The natives who confine themselves to snow water in the winter, and drink of the small rivulets which flow through the plains in the summer, are exempt from the attacks of this disease.

"These facts are curious, inasmuch as they militate against the generally-received opinion that the disease is caused by drinking snow-water; an opinion which seems to have originated from bronchocele being endemial to sub-alpine districts.

"The Saskatchawan, at Edmonton, is clear in the winter, and also in the summer, except during the May and July floods. The distance from

the Rocky Mountains (which I suppose to be of primitive formation,) is upwards of one hundred and thirty miles. The neighbouring plains are alluvial, the soil is calcareous, and contains numerous travelled fragments of limestone. At a considerable distance below Edmonton, the river, continuing its course through the plains, becomes turbid, and acquires a white colour. In this state it is drunk by the inmates of Carlton House, where the disease is known only by name. It is said that the inhabitants of Rocky Mountain House, sixty miles nearer the source of the river are more severely affected than those at Edmonton. The same disease occurs near the sources of the Elk and Peace Rivers; but, in those parts of the country which are distant from the Rocky Mountain Chain, it is unknown, although melted snow forms the only drink of the natives for nine months of the year.

"A residence of a single year at Edmonton is sufficient to render a family bronchocelous. Many of the goitres acquire great size. Burnt sponge has been tried, and found to remove the disease, but an exposure to the same cause immediately reproduces it.

"A great proportion of the children of women who have goitres, are born idiots, with large heads, and the other distinguishing marks of *cretins*. I could not learn whether it was neces-

sary that both parents should have goitres, to produce cretin children: indeed the want of chastity in the half-breed women would be a bar to the deduction of any inference on this head."

*February* 8.—Having recovered from the swellings and pains which our late march from Cumberland had occasioned, we prepared for the commencement of our journey to Isle à la Crosse, and requisitions were made on both the establishments for the means of conveyance, and the necessary supply of provisions for the party, which were readily furnished. On the 9th the carioles and sledges were loaded, and sent off after breakfast; but Mr. Back and I remained till the afternoon, as Mr. Prudens had offered that his horses should convey us to the encampment. At 3 P.M. we parted from our kind host, and in passing through the gate were honoured with a salute of musketry. After riding six miles, we joined the men at their encampment, which was made under the shelter of a few poplars. The dogs had been so much fatigued in wading through the very deep snow with their heavy burdens, having to drag upwards of ninety pounds' weight each, that they could get no farther. Soon after our arrival, the snow began to fall heavily, and it continued through the greater part of the night.

Our next day's march was therefore particularly tedious, the snow being deep, and the route lying

across an unvarying level, destitute of wood, except one small cluster of willows. In the afternoon we reached the end of the plain, and came to an elevation, on which poplars, willows, and some pines grew, where we encamped; having travelled ten miles. We crossed three small lakes, two of fresh water and one of salt, near the latter of which we encamped, and were, in consequence, obliged to use for our tea, water made from snow, which has always a disagreeable taste.

We had scarcely ascended the hill on the following morning, when a large herd of red-deer was perceived grazing at a little distance; and, though we were amply supplied with provision, our Canadian companions could not resist the temptation of endeavouring to add to our stock. A half-breed hunter was therefore sent after them. He succeeded in wounding one, but not so as to prevent its running off with the herd in a direction wide of our course. A couple of rabbits and a brace of wood partridges were shot in the afternoon. There was an agreeable variety of hill and dale in the scenery we passed through to-day; and sufficient wood for ornament, but not enough to crowd the picture. The valleys were intersected by several small lakes and pools, whose snowy covering was happily contrasted with the

dark green of the pine-trees which surrounded them. After ascending a moderately high hill by a winding path through a close wood, we opened suddenly upon Lake Iroquois, and had a full view of its picturesque shores. We crossed it and encamped.

Though the sky was cloudless, yet the weather was warm. We had the gratification of finding a beaten track soon after we started on the morning of the 12th, and were thus enabled to walk briskly. We crossed at least twenty hills, and found a small lake or pool at the foot of each. The destructive ravages of fire were visible during the greater part of the day. The only wood we saw for miles together consisted of pine-trees stript of their branches and bark by this element: in other parts poplars alone were growing, which we have remarked invariably to succeed the pine after a conflagration. We walked twenty miles to-day, but the direct distance was only sixteen.

The remains of an Indian hut were found in a deep glen, and close to it was placed a pile of wood, which our companions supposed to cover a deposit of provision. Our Canadian voyagers, induced by their insatiable desire of procuring food, proceeded to remove the upper pieces, and examine its contents; when, to their suprise, they

found the body of a female, clothed in leather, which appeared to have been recently placed there. Her former garments, the materials for making a fire, a fishing-line, a hatchet, and a bark dish, were laid beside the corpse. The wood was carefully replaced. A small owl, perched on a tree near the spot, called forth many singular remarks from our companions, as to its being a good or bad ômen.

We walked the whole of the 13th over flat meadow-land, which is much resorted to by the buffalo at all seasons. Some herds of them were seen, which our hunters were too unskilful to approach. In the afternoon we reached the Stinking Lake, which is nearly of an oval form. Its shores are very low and swampy, to which circumstances, and not to the bad quality of the waters, it owes its Indian name. Our observations place its western part in latitude 53° 25′ 24″ N., longitude 107° 18′ 58″ W., variation 20° 32′ 10″ E.

After a march of fifteen miles and a half, we encamped among a few pines, at the only spot where we saw sufficient wood for making our fire during the day. The next morning, about an hour after we had commenced our march, we came upon a beaten track, and perceived recent marks of snow-shoes. In a short time an Iroquois joined us, who was residing with a party of Cree-

Indians, to secure the meat and furs they should collect, for the North-West Company. He accompanied us as far as the stage on which his meat was placed, and then gave us a very pressing invitation to halt for the day and partake of his fare; which, as the hour was too early, we declined, much to the annoyance of our Canadian companions, who had been cherishing the prospect of indulging their amazing appetites at this well-furnished store, ever since the man had been with us. He gave them, however, a small supply previous to our parting. The route now crossed some ranges of hills, on which fir, birch, and poplar, grew so thickly, that we had much difficulty in getting the sledges through the narrow pathway between them. In the evening we descended from the elevated ground, crossed three swampy meadows, and encamped at their northern extremity, within a cluster of large pine-trees, the branches of which were elegantly decorated with abundance of a greenish yellow lichen. Our march was ten miles. The weather was very mild, almost too warm for the exercise we were taking.

We had a strong gale from the N.W. during the night, which subsided as the morning opened. One of the sledges had been so much broken the day before in the woods, that we had to divide its

cargo among the others. We started after this had been arranged, and finding almost immediately a firm track, soon arrived at some Indian lodges to which it led. The inhabitants were Crees, belonging to the posts on the Saskatchawan, from whence they had come to hunt beaver. We made but a short stay, and proceeded through a Swamp to Pelican Lake. Our view to the right was bounded by a range of lofty hills, which extended for several miles in a north and south direction, which, it may be remarked, was that of all the hilly land we had passed since quitting the plain.

Pelican Lake is of an irregular form, about six miles from east to west, and eight from north to south; it decreases to the breadth of a mile towards the northern extremity, and is there terminated by a creek. We went up this creek for a short distance, and then struck into the woods, and encamped among a cluster of the firs, which the Canadians term cyprès. (*pinus Banksiana,*) having come fourteen miles and a half.

*February* 16.—Shortly after commencing the journey to-day, we met an Indian and his family, who had come from the houses at Green Lake; they informed us the track was well beaten the whole way. We therefore, put forth our utmost speed in the hope of reaching them by night; but were disappointed, and had to halt at dark, about

twelve miles from them, in a fisherman's hut, which was unoccupied. Frequent showers of snow fell during the day, and the atmosphere was thick and gloomy.

We started at an early hour the following morning, and reached the Hudson's Bay Company's post to breakfast, and were received very kindly by Mr. Mac Farlane, the gentleman in charge. The other establishment, situated on the opposite side of the river, was under the direction of Mr. Dugald Cameron, one of the partners of the North-West Company, on whom Mr. Back and I called soon after our arrival, and were honoured with a salute of musquetry.

These establishments are small, but said to be well situated for procuring furs; as the numerous creeks in their vicinity are much resorted to by the beaver, otter, and musquash. The residents usually obtain a superabundant supply of provision. This season, however, they barely had sufficient for their own support, owing to the epidemic which has incapacitated the Indians for hunting. The Green Lake lies nearly north and south, is eighteen miles in length, and does not exceed one mile and a half of breadth in any part. The water is deep, and it is in consequence one of the last lakes in the country that is frozen. Excellent tittameg and trout are caught in it from March to December,

but after that time most of the fish remove to some larger lake.

We remained two days, awaiting the return of some men who had been sent to the Indian lodges for meat, and who were to go on with us. Mr. Back and I did not need this rest, having completely surmounted the pain occasioned by the snow-shoes. We dined twice with Mr. Cameron, and received from him many useful suggestions respecting our future operations. This gentleman having informed us that provisions would, probably, be very scarce next spring in the Athabasca department, in consequence of the sickness of the Indians during the hunting season, undertook at my request to cause a supply of pemmican to be conveyed from the Saskatchawan to Isle à la Crosse for our use during the winter, and I wrote to apprize Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood, that they would find it at the latter post when they passed; and also to desire them to bring as much as the canoes would stow from Cumberland.

The atmosphere was clear and cold during our stay; observations were obtained at the Hudson Bay Fort, lat. 54° 16′ 10″ N., long. 107° 29′ 52″ W., var. 22° 6′ 35″ E.

*February* 20.—Having been equipped with carioles, sledges, and provisions, from the two

posts, we this day recommenced our journey, and were much amused by the novelty of the salute given at our departure, the guns being principally fired by the women in the absence of the men. Our course was directed to the end of the lake, and for a short distance along a small river; we then crossed the woods to the Beaver River, which we found to be narrow and very serpentine, having moderately high banks. We encamped about one mile and a half further up among poplars. The next day we proceeded along the river; it was winding, and about two hundred yards broad. We passed the mouths of two rivers whose waters it receives; the latter one, we were informed, is a channel by which the Indians go to the Lesser Slave Lake. The banks of the river became higher as we advanced, and were adorned with pines, poplars, and willows.

Though the weather was very cold, we travelled more comfortably than at any preceding time since our departure from Cumberland, as we had light carioles, which enabled us to ride nearly the whole day, warmly covered up with a buffalo robe. We were joined by Mr. M'Leod, of the North-West Company, who had kindly brought some things from Green Lake, which our sledges could not carry. Pursuing our route

along the river, we reached at an early hour the upper extremity of the "Grand Rapid," where the ice was so rough that the carioles and sledges had to be conveyed across a point of land. Soon after noon we left the river, inclining N.E., and directed our course N.W., until we reached Long Lake, and encamped at its northern extremity, having come twenty-three miles. This lake is about fourteen miles long, and from three quarters to one mile and a half broad; its shores and islands low, but well wooded. There were frequent snow-showers during the day.

*February* 23.—The night was very stormy, but the wind became more moderate in the morning. We passed to-day through several nameless lakes and swamps before we came to Train Lake, which received its name from being the place where the traders procured the birch to make their sledges, or traineaux; but this wood has been all used, and there only remain pines and a few poplars. We met some sledges laden with fish, kindly sent to meet us by Mr. Clark, of the Hudson's Bay Company, on hearing of our approach. Towards the evening the weather became much more unpleasant, and we were exposed to a piercingly cold wind, and much snow-drift, in traversing the Isle à la Crosse Lake; we were, therefore, highly pleased at reaching the

Hudson's Bay House by six P.M. We were received in the most friendly manner by Mr. Clark, and honoured by volleys of musketry, Similar marks of attention were shewn to us on the following day by Mr. Bethune, the partner in charge of the North-West Company's Fort. I found here the letters which I had addressed from Cumberland, in November last, to the partners of the North-West Company, in the Athabasca, which circumstance convinced me of the necessity of our present journey.

These establishments are situated on the southern side of the lake, and close to each other. They are forts of considerable importance, being placed at a point of communication with the English River, the Athabasca, and Columbia Districts. The country around them is low, and intersected with water, and was formerly much frequented by beavers and otters, which, however, have been so much hunted by the Indians, that their number is greatly decreased. The Indians frequenting these forts are the Crees and some Chipewyans; they scarcely ever come except in the spring and autumn; in the former season to bring their winter's collection of furs, and in the latter to get the stores they require.

Three Chipewyan lads came in during our stay, to report what furs the band to which they

belonged had collected, and to desire they might be sent for; the Indians having declined bringing either furs or meat themselves, since the opposition between the Companies commenced. Mr. Back drew the portrait of one of the boys.

Isle à la Crosse Lake receives its name from an island situated near the forts, on which the Indians formerly assembled annually to amuse themselves at the game of the Cross. It is justly celebrated for abundance of the finest tittameg, which weigh from five to fifteen pounds. The residents live principally upon this most delicious fish, which fortunately can be eaten a long time without disrelish. It is plentifully caught with nets throughout the year, except for two or three months.

*March* 4.—We witnessed the Aurora Borealis very brilliant for the second time since our departure from Cumberland. A winter encampment is not a favourable situation for viewing this phenomenon, as the trees in general hide the sky. Arrangements had been made for recommencing our journey to-day, but the wind was stormy, and the snow had drifted too much for travelling with comfort; we therefore stayed and dined with Mr. Bethune, who promised to render every assistance in getting pemmican conveyed to us from the Saskatchawan, to be in

readiness for our canoes, when they might arrive in the spring; Mr. Clark also engaged to procure six bags for us, and to furnish our canoes with any other supplies which might be wanted, and could be spared from his post, and to contribute his aid in forwarding the pemmican to the Athabasca, if our canoes could not carry it all.

I feel greatly indebted to this gentleman for much valuable information respecting the country and the Indians residing to the north of Slave Lake, and for furnishing me with a list of stores he supposed we should require. He had resided some years on Mackenzie's River, and had been once so far towards its mouth as to meet the Esquimaux in great numbers. But they assumed such a hostile attitude, that he deemed it unadvisable to attempt opening any communication with them, and retreated as speedily as he could.

The observations we obtained here shewed that the chronometers had varied their rates a little in consequence of the jolting of the carioles, but their errors and rates were ascertained previous to our departure. We observed the position of this fort to be latitude 55° 25 35″ N., longitude 107° 51′ 00″ W., by lunars reduced back from Fort Chipewyan, variation 22° 15′ 48″ W., dip 84° 13′ 35″.

*March* 5.—We recommenced our journey this morning, having been supplied with the means of conveyance by both the Companies in equal proportions. Mr. Clark accompanied us with the intention of going as far as the boundary of his district. This gentleman was an experienced winter traveller, and we derived much benefit from his suggestions; he caused the men to arrange the encampment with more attention to comfort and shelter than our former companions had done. After marching eighteen miles we put up on Gravel Point, in the Deep River.

At nine the next morning, we came to the commencement of Clear Lake. We crossed its southern extremes, and then went over a point of land to Buffalo Lake, and encamped after travelling twenty-six miles. After supper we were entertained till midnight with paddling songs, by our Canadians, who required very little stimulus beyond their natural vivacity, to afford us this diversion. The next morning we arrived at the establishments which are situated on the western side of the lake, near a small stream, called the Beaver River. They were small log buildings, hastily erected last October, for the convenience of the Indians who hunt in the vicinity. Mr. Mac Murray, a partner in the N.W. Company, having sent to Isle à la Crosse an invitation to

Mr. Back and I, our carioles were driven to his post, and we experienced the kindest reception. These posts are frequented by only a few Indians, Crees, and Chipewyans. The country round is not sufficiently stocked with animals to afford support to many families, and the traders subsist almost entirely on fish caught in the autumn, prior to the lake being frozen; but the water being shallow, they remove to a deeper part, as soon as the lake is covered with ice. The Aurora Borealis was brilliantly displayed on both the nights we remained here, but particularly on the 7th, when its appearances were most diversified, and the motion extremely rapid. Its coruscations occasionally concealed from sight stars of the first magnitude in passing over them, at other times these were faintly discerned through them; once I perceived a stream of light to illumine the under surface of some clouds as it passed along. There was no perceptible noise.

Mr. Mac Murray gave a dance to his voyagers and the women; this is a treat which they expect on the arrival of any stranger at the post.

We were presented by this gentleman with the valuable skin of a black fox, which he had entrapped some days before our arrival; it was forwarded to England with other specimens.

Our observations place the North-West Company's House in latitude 55° 53′ 00″ N., longitude 108° 51′ 10″ W., variation 22° 33′ 22″ E.

The shores of Buffalo Lake are of moderate height, and well wooded, but immediately beyond the bank the country is very swampy and intersected with water in every direction. At some distance from the western side there is a conspicuous hill, which we hailed with much pleasure, as being the first interruption to the tediously uniform scene we had for some time passed through.

On the 10th we recommenced our journey after breakfast, and travelled quickly, as we had the advantage of a well-beaten track. At the end of eighteen miles we entered upon the river "Loche," which has a serpentine course, and is confined between alluvial banks that support stunted willows and a few pines; we encamped about three miles further on; and in the course of the next day's march perceived several holes on the ice, and many unsafe places for the sledges. Our companions said the ice of this river is always in the same insecure state, even during the most severe winter, which they attributed to warm springs. Quitting the river, we crossed a portage and came upon the Methye Lake, and soon afterwards arrived at the trading posts on its western side. These were perfect huts,

which had been hastily built after the commencement of the last winter. We here saw two hunters who were Chipewyan half-breeds, and made many inquiries of them respecting the countries we expected to visit, but we found them quite ignorant of every part beyond the Athabasca Lake. They spoke of Mr. Hearne and of his companion Matonnabee, but did not add to our stock of information respecting that journey. It had happened before their birth, but they remembered the expedition of Sir Alexander Mackenzie towards the sea.

This is a picturesque lake, about ten miles long and six broad, and receives its name from a species of fish caught in it, but not much esteemed; the residents never eat any part but the liver except through necessity, the dogs dislike even that. The tittameg and trout are also caught in the fall of the year. The position of the houses by our observations is latitude 56° 24′ 20″ N., longitude 109° 23′ 06″ W., variation 22° 50′ 28″ E.

On the 13th we renewed our journey and parted from Mr. Clark, to whom we were much obliged for his hospitality and kindness. We soon reached the Methye Portage, and had a very pleasant ride across it in our carioles. The track was good and led through groups of pines,

so happily placed that it would not have required a great stretch of imagination to fancy ourselves in a well-arranged park. We had now to cross a small lake, and then gradually ascended hills beyond it, until we arrived at the summit of a lofty chain of mountains commanding the most picturesque and romantic prospect we had yet seen in this country. Two ranges of high hills run parallel to each other for several miles, until the faint blue haze hides their particular characters, when they slightly change their course, and are lost to the view. The space between them is occupied by nearly a level plain, through which a river pursues a meandering course, and receives supplies from the creeks and rills issuing from the mountains on each side. The prospect was delightful even amid the snow, and though marked with all the cheerless characters of winter; how much more charming must it be when the trees are in leaf, and the ground is arrayed in summer verdure! Some faint idea of the difference was conveyed to my mind by witnessing the effect of the departing rays of a brilliant sun. The distant prospect, however, is surpassed in grandeur by the wild scenery which appeared immediately below our feet. There the eye penetrates into vast ravines two or three hundred feet in depth, that are

clothed with trees, and lie on either side of the narrow pathway descending to the river over eight successive ridges of hills. At one spot termed the Cockscomb, the traveller stands insulated as it were on a small slip, where a false step might precipitate him into the glen. From this place Mr. Back took an interesting and accurate sketch, to allow time for which, we encamped early, having come twenty-one miles.

The Methye Portage is about twelve miles in extent, and over this space the canoes and all their cargoes are carried, both in going to and from the Athabasca department. It is part of the range of mountains which separates the waters flowing south from those flowing north. According to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, "this range of hills continues in a S.W. direction until its local height is lost between the Saskatchawan and Elk Rivers, close on the banks of the former, in latitude 53° 36′ N., longitude 113° 45′ W., when it appears to take its course due north." Observations, taken in the spring by Mr. Hood, place the northside of the portage in latitude 56° 41′ 40″ N., longitude 109° 52′ 15″ W., variation 25° 2′ 30″ E., dip 85° 7′ 27″.

At daylight on the 14th we began to descend the range of hills leading towards the river, and no small care was required to prevent the sledges

from being broken in going down these almost perpendicular heights, or being precipitated into the glens on each side. As a precautionary measure the dogs were taken off, and the sledges guided by the men, notwithstanding which they descended with amazing rapidity, and the men were thrown into the most ridiculous attitudes in endeavouring to stop them. When we had arrived at the bottom I could not but feel astonished at the laborious task which the voyagers have twice in the year to encounter at this place, in conveying their stores backwards and forwards. We went across the Clear Water River, which runs at the bases of these hills, and followed an Indian track along its northern bank, by which we avoided the White Mud and Good Portages. We afterwards followed the river as far as the Pine Portage, when we passed through a very romantic defile of rocks, which presented the appearance of Gothic ruins, and their rude characters were happily contrasted with the softness of the snow, and the darker foliage of the pines which crowned their summits. We next crossed the Cascade Portage, which is the last on the way to the Athabasca Lake, and soon afterwards came to some Indian tents, containing five families, belonging to the Chipewyan tribe. We smoked the calumet in the Chief's tent, whose name was

the Thumb, and distributed some tobacco and a weak mixture of spirits and water among the men. They received this civility with much less grace than the Crees, and seemed to consider it a matter of course. There was an utter neglect of cleanliness, and a total want of comfort in their tents; and the poor creatures were miserably clothed. Mr. Frazer, who accompanied us from the Methye Lake, accounted for their being in this forlorn condition by explaining, that this band of Indians had recently destroyed every thing they possessed, as a token of their great grief for the loss of their relatives in the prevailing sickness. It appears that no article is spared by these unhappy men when a near relative dies; their clothes and tents are cut to pieces, their guns broken, and every other weapon rendered useless, if some person do not remove these articles from their sight, which is seldom done.—Mr. Back sketched one of the children, which delighted the father very much, who charged the boy to be very good, since his picture had been drawn by a great chief. We learned that they prize pictures very highly, and esteem any they can get, however badly executed, as efficient charms. They were unable to give us any information respecting the country beyond the Athabasca Lake, which is the boundary of their pere-

grinations to the northward. Having been apprized of our coming, they had prepared an encampment for us; but we had witnessed too many proofs of their importunity to expect that we could pass the night near them in any comfort, whilst either spirits, tobacco, or sugar remained in our possession; and therefore preferred to go about two miles further along the river, and to encamp among a cluster of fine pine-trees, after a journey of sixteen miles.

On the morning of the 15th, in proceeding along the river we perceived a strong smell of sulphur, and on the north shore found a quantity of it scattered, which seemed to have been deposited by some spring in the neighbourhood: it appeared very pure and good. We continued our course the whole day along the river, which is about four hundred yards wide, has some islands, and is confined between low land, extending from the bases of the mountains on each side. We put up at the end of thirteen miles, and were then joined by a Chipewyan, who came, as we supposed, to serve as our guide to Pierre au Calumet, but as none of the party could communicate with our new friend, otherwise than by signs, we waited patiently until the morning to see what he intended to do. The wind blew a gale during the night, and the snow fell heavily. The next

day our guide led us to the Pembina River, which comes from the southward, where we found traces of Indians, who appeared to have quitted this station the day before; we had, therefore, the benefit of a good track, which our dogs much required, as they were greatly fatigued, having dragged their loads through very deep snow for the last two days. A moose-deer crossed the river just before the party: this animal is plentiful in the vicinity. We encamped in a pleasant well-sheltered place, having travelled fourteen miles.

A short distance on the following morning, brought us to some Indian lodges, which belonged to an old Chipewyan chief, named the Sun, and his family, consisting of five hunters, their wives, and children. They were delighted to see us, and when the object of our expedition had been explained to them, expressed themselves much interested in our progress; but they could not give a particle of information respecting the countries beyond the Athabasca Lake. We smoked with them, and gave each person a glass of mixed spirits and some tobacco. A Canadian servant of the North-West Company, who was residing with them, informed us that this family had lost numerous relatives, and that the destruction of property, which had been made,

after their deaths, was the only cause for the pitiable condition in which we saw them, as the whole family were industrious hunters, and, therefore, were usually better provided with clothes, and other useful articles, than most of the Indians. We purchased from them a pair of snow-shoes, in exchange for some ammunition. The Chipewyans are celebrated for making them good and easy to walk in; we saw some here upwards of six feet long; and three broad. With these unwieldy clogs an active hunter, in the spring, when there is a crust on the surface of the snow, will run down a moose or red deer.

We made very slow progress after leaving this party, on account of the deep snow, but continued along the river until we reached its junction with the Athabasca or Elk River. We obtained observations on an island, a little below the Forks, which gave, longitude 111° 8′ 42″ W., variation 24° 18′ 20″ E. Very little wood was seen during this day's march. The western shore, near the Forks, is destitute of trees; it is composed of lofty perpendicular cliffs, which were now covered with snow. The eastern shore supports a few pines.

*March* 18.—Soon after our departure from the encampment, we met two men from the establishment at Pierre au Calumet, who gave us correct

information of its situation and distance. Having the benefit of their track, we marched at a tolerably quick pace, and made twenty-two miles in the course of the day, though the weather was very disagreeable for travelling, being stormy, with constant snow. We kept along the river the whole time: its breadth is about two miles. The islands appear better furnished with wood than its banks, the summits of which are almost bare. Soon after we had encamped our Indian guide rejoined us; he had remained behind the day before, without consulting us, to accompany a friend on a hunting excursion. On his return he made no endeavour to explain the reason of his absence, but sat down coolly, and began to prepare his supper. This behaviour made us sensible that little dependence is to be placed on the continuance of an Indian guide, when his inclination leads him away.

Early the next morning we sent forward the Indian and a Canadian, to apprize the gentleman in charge of Pierre au Calumet of our approach; and, after breakfast, the rest of the party proceeded along the river for that station, which we reached in the afternoon. The senior partner of the North-West Company in the Athabasca department, Mr. John Stuart, was in charge of the post. Though he was quite ignorant until this

morning of our being in the country, we found him prepared to receive us with great kindness, and ready to afford every information and assistance, agreeably to the desire conveyed in Mr. Simon M'Gillivray's circular letter. This gentleman had twice traversed this continent, and reached the Pacific by the Columbia River; he was therefore, fully conversant with the different modes of travelling, and with the obstacles that may be expected in passing through unfrequented countries. His suggestions and advice were consequently very valuable to us, but not having been to the northward of the Great Slave Lake, he had no knowledge of that line of country, except what he had gained from the reports of Indians. He was of opinion, however, that positive information, on which our course of proceedings might safely be determined, could be procured from the Indians that frequent the north side of the lake, when they came to the forts in the Spring. He recommended my writing to the partner in charge of that department, requesting him to collect all the intelligence he could, and to provide guides and hunters from the tribe best acquainted with the country through which we proposed to travel.

To our great regret, Mr. Stuart expressed much doubt as to our prevailing upon any expe-

rienced Canadian voyagers to accompany us to the sea, in consequence of their dread of the Esquimaux; who, he informed us, had already destroyed the crew of one canoe, which had been sent under Mr. Livingstone, to open a trading communication with those who reside near the mouth of the Mackenzie River; and he also mentioned, that the same tribe had driven away the canoes under Mr. Clark's direction, going to them on a similar object, to which circumstance I have alluded in my remarks at Isle à la Crosse.

This was unpleasant information; but we were comforted by Mr. Stuart's assurance that himself and his partners would use every endeavour to remove their fears, as well as to promote our views in every other way; and he undertook, as a necessary part of our equipment in the spring, to prepare the bark and other materials for constructing two canoes at this post.

Mr. Stuart informed us that the residents at Fort Chipewyan, from the recent sickness of their Indian hunters, had been reduced to subsist entirely on the produce of their fishing-nets, which did not then yield more than a bare sufficiency for their support; and he kindly proposed to us to remain with him until the spring: but, as we were most desirous to gain all the information we could as

early as possible, and Mr. Stuart assured us that the addition of three persons would not be materially felt in their large family at Chipewyan, we determined on proceeding thither, and fixed on the 22d for our departure.

Pierre au Calumet receives its name from the place where the stone is procured, of which many of the pipes used by the Canadians and Indians are made. It is a clayey limestone, impregnated with various shells. The house, which is built on the summit of a steep bank, rising almost perpendicular to the height of one hundred and eighty feet, commands an extensive prospect along this fine river, and over the plains which stretch out several miles at the back of it, bounded by hills of considerable height, and apparently better furnished with wood than the neighbourhood of the fort, where the trees grow very scantily. There had been an establishment belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company on the opposite bank of the river, but it was abandoned in December last, the residents not being able to procure provision, from their hunters having been disabled by the epidemic sickness, which has carried off one-third of the Indians in these parts. They belong to the Northern Crees, a name given them from their residing in the Athabasca

department. There are now but few families of these men, who, formerly, by their numbers and predatory habits, spread terror among the natives of this part of the country.

There are springs of bituminous matter on several of the islands near these houses; and the stones on the river-bank are much impregnated with this useful substance. There is also another place remarkable for the production of a sulphureous salt, which is deposited on the surface of a round-backed hill about half a mile from the beach, and on the marshy ground underneath it. We visited these places at a subsequent period of the journey, and descriptions of them will appear in Dr. Richardson's Mineralogical Notices.

The latitude of the North-West Company's House is 57° 24′ 06″ N., but this was the only observation we could obtain, the atmosphere being cloudy. Mr. Stuart had an excellent thermometer, which indicated the lowest state of temperature to be 43° below zero. He told me 45° was the lowest temperature he had ever witnessed at the Athabasca or Great Slave Lake, after many years' residence. On the 21st it rose above zero, and at noon attained the height of 43°; the atmosphere was sultry, snow fell constantly, and there was quite an appearance of a change in the season. On the

22d we parted from our hospitable friend, and recommenced our journey, but under the expectation of seeing him again in May; at which time the partners of the Company usually assemble at Fort Chipewyan, where we hoped the necessary arrangements for our future proceedings would be completed. We encamped at sunset at the end of fourteen miles, having walked the whole way along the river, which preserves nearly a true north course, and is from four hundred to six hundred yards broad. The banks are high, and well clothed with the liard, spruce, fir, alder, birch-tree, and willows. Having come nineteen miles and a half, on the 23d, we encamped among pines of a great height and girth.

Showers of snow fell until noon on the following day, but we continued our journey along the river, whose banks and islands became gradually lower as we advanced, and less abundantly supplied with wood, except willows. We passed an old Canadian, who was resting his wearied dogs during the heat of the sun. He was carrying meat from some Indian lodges to Fort Chipewyan, having a burden exceeding two hundred and fifty pounds on his sledge, which was dragged by two miserable dogs. He came up to our encampment after dark. We were much amused by the altercation that took place between

him and our Canadian companions as to the qualifications of their respective dogs. This, however, is such a general topic of conversation among the voyagers in the encampment, that we should not probably have remarked it, had not the old man frequently offered to bet the whole of his wages that his two dogs, poor and lean as they were, would drag their load to the Athabasca Lake in less time than any three of theirs. Having expressed our surprise at his apparent temerity, he coolly said the men from the lower countries did not understand the management of their dogs, and that he depended on his superior skill in driving; and we soon gathered from his remarks, that the voyagers of the Athabasca department consider themselves very superior to any other. The only reasons which he could assign were, that they had borne their burdens across the terrible Methye Portage, and that they were accustomed to live harder and more precariously.

*March* 25.—Having now the guidance of the old Canadian, we sent forward the Indian, and one of our men, with letters to the gentleman at the Athabasca Lake. The rest of the party set off afterwards, and kept along the river until ten, when we branched off by portages into the Embarras River, the usual channel of communication

in canoes with the lake. It is a narrow and serpentine stream, confined between alluvial banks which support pines, poplars, and willows. We had not advanced far before we overtook the two men despatched by us this morning. The stormy weather had compelled them to encamp, as there was too much drifting of the snow for any attempt to cross the lake. We were obliged, though most reluctantly, to follow their example; but comforted ourselves with the reflection that this was the first time we had been stopped by the weather during our long journey, which was so near at an end. The gale afterwards increased, the squalls at night became very violent, disburthened the trees of the snow, and gave us the benefit of a continual fall of patches from them, in addition to the constant shower. We therefore quickly finished our suppers, and retired under the shelter of our blankets.

*March* 26.—The boisterous weather continued through the night, and it was not before six this morning that the wind became apparently moderate, and the snow ceased. Two of the Canadians were immediately sent off with letters to the gentlemen at Fort Chipewyan. After breakfast we also started, but our Indian friend, having a great indisposition to move in such weather,

remained by the fire. We soon quitted the river, and after crossing a portage, a small lake, and a point of land, came to the borders of the Mamma-wee Lake. We then found our error as to the strength of the wind; and that the gale still blew violently, and there was so much drifting of the snow as to cover the distant objects by which our course could be directed. We fortunately got a glimpse through this cloud of a cluster of islands in the direction of the houses, and decided on walking towards them; but in doing this we suffered very much from the cold, and were obliged to halt under the shelter of them, and await the arrival of our Indian guide. He conducted us between these islands, over a small lake, and by a swampy river, into the Athabasca Lake, from whence the establishments were visible. At four P.M. we had the pleasure of arriving at Fort Chipewyan, and of being received by Messrs. Keith and Black, the partners of the North-West Company in charge, in the most kind and hospitable manner. Thus terminated a winter's journey of eight hundred and fifty-seven miles, in the progress of which there was a great intermixture of agreeable and disagreeable circumstances. Could the amount of each be balanced, I suspect the latter would much preponderate; and amongst these

the initiation into walking in snow-shoes must be considered as prominent. The suffering it occasions can be but faintly imagined by a person who thinks upon the inconvenience of marching with a weight of between two and three pounds constantly attached to galled feet, and swelled ankles. Perseverance and practice only will enable the novice to surmount this pain.

The next evil is the being constantly exposed to witness the wanton and unnecessary cruelty of the men to their dogs, especially those of the Canadians, who beat them unmercifully, and habitually vent on them the most dreadful and disgusting imprecations. There are other inconveniences which though keenly felt during the day's journey, are speedily forgotten when stretched out in the encampment before a large fire, you enjoy the social mirth of your companions, who usually pass the evening in recounting their former feats in travelling. At this time the Canadians are always cheerful and merry, and the only bar to their comfort arises from the frequent interruption occasioned by the dogs, who are constantly prowling about the circle, and snatching at every kind of food that happens to be within their reach. These useful animals are a comfort to them afterwards, by the warmth

they impart when lying down by their side or feet, as they usually do. But the greatest gratifications a traveller in these regions enjoys, are derived from the hospitable welcome he receives at every trading post, however poor the means of the host may be; and from being disrobed even for a short time of the trappings of a voyager, and experiencing the pleasures of cleanliness.

The following are the estimated distances, in statute miles, which Mr. Back and I had travelled since our departure from Cumberland:

| | |
|---|---|
| From Cumberland House to Carlton House . . | 233 |
| From Carlton to Isle à la Crosse . . . . | 230 |
| From Isle à la Crosse to north side of the Methye Portage . . . . . | 124 |
| From the Methye Portage to Fort Chipewyan . | 210 |
| | 857 Miles. |

## CHAPTER V.

Transactions at Fort Chipewyan—Arrival of Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood—Preparations for our journey to the Northward.

1820. March 26. On the day after our arrival at Fort Chipewyan we called upon Mr. Mac Donald, the gentleman in charge of the Hudson's Bay Establishment called Fort Wedderburne, and delivered to him Governor Williams's circular Letter, which desired that every assistance should be given to further our progress, and a statement of the requisitions which we should have to make on his post.

Our first object was to obtain some certain information respecting our future route; and accordingly we received from one of the North-West Company's interpreters, named Beaulieu, a half-breed, who had been brought up amongst the Dog-ribbed and Copper Indians, some satisfactory information which we afterwards found tolerably correct, respecting the mode of reaching the Copper-mine River, which he had descended a considerable way, as well as of the course of

that river to its mouth. The Copper Indians, however, he said, would be able to give us more accurate information as to the latter part of its course, as they occasionally pursue it to the sea. He sketched on the floor a representation of the river, and a line of coast according to his idea of it. Just as he had finished, an old Chipewyan Indian named Black Meat, unexpectedly came in, and instantly recognised the plan. He then took the charcoal from Beaulieu, and inserted a track along the sea-coast, which he had followed in returning from a war excursion, made by his tribe against the Esquimaux. He detailed several particulars of the coast and the sea, which he represented as studded with well-wooded islands, and free from ice, close to the shore, in the month of July, but not to a great distance. He described two other rivers to the eastward of the Copper-mine River, which also fall into the Northern Ocean. The Anatessy, which issues from the Contway-to or Rum Lake, and the Thloueea-tessy or Fish River, which rises near the eastern boundary of the Great Slave Lake; but he represented both of them as being shallow, and too much interrupted by barriers for being navigated in any other than small Indian canoes.

Having received this satisfactory intelligence, I wrote immediately to Mr. Smith, of the North-

West Company, and Mr. M'Vicar, of the Hudson's Bay Company, the gentlemen in charge of the posts at the Great Slave Lake, to communicate the object of the Expedition, and our proposed route; and to solicit any information they possessed, or could collect, from the Indians, relative to the countries we had to pass through, and the best manner of proceeding. As the Copper Indians frequent the establishment on the north side of the lake, I particularly requested them to explain to that tribe the object of our visit, and to endeavour to procure from them some guides and hunters to accompany our party. Two Canadians were sent by Mr. Keith with these letters.

The month of April commenced with fine and clear but extremely cold weather; unfortunately we were still without a thermometer, and could not ascertain the degrees of temperature. The coruscations of the Aurora were very brilliant almost every evening of the first week, and were generally of the most variable kind. On the 3d they were particularly changeable. The first appearance exhibited three illuminated beams issuing from the horizon in the north, east, and west points, and directed towards the zenith; in a few seconds these disappeared, and a complete circle was displayed, bounding the horizon at an

elevation of fifteen degrees. There was a quick lateral motion in the attenuated beams of which this zone was composed. Its colour was a pale yellow, with an occasional tinge of red.

On the 8th of April the Indians saw some geese in the vicinity of this lake, but none of the migratory birds appeared near the houses before the 15th, when some swans flew over. These are generally the first that arrive; the weather had been very stormy for the four preceding days, and this in all probability kept the birds from venturing farther north than where the Indians had first seen them.

In the middle of the month the snow began to waste daily, and by degrees it disappeared from the hills and the surface of the lake. On the 17th and 19th the Aurora appeared very brilliant in patches of light, bearing N. W. An old Cree Indian having found a beaver-lodge near to the fort, Mr. Keith, Back, and I, accompanied him to see the method of breaking into it, and their mode of taking those interesting animals. The lodge was constructed on the side of a rock in a small lake, having the entrance into it beneath the ice. The frames were formed of layers of sticks, the interstices being filled with mud, and the outside was plastered with earth and stones, which the frost had so completely consolidated,

that to break through required great labour, with the aid of the ice chisel, and the other iron instruments which the beaver hunters use. The chase however, was unsuccessful, as the beaver had previously vacated the lodge.

On the 21st we observed the first geese that flew near the fort, and some were brought to the house on the 30th, but they were very lean. On the 25th flies were seen sporting in the sun, and on the 26th the Athabasca River having broken up, overflowed the lake along its channel; but except where this water spread, there was no appearance of decay in the ice.

*May*.—During the first part of this month, the wind blew from the N.W., and the sky was cloudy. It generally thawed during the day, but froze at night. On the 2nd the Aurora faintly gleamed through very dense clouds.

We had a long conversation with Mr. Dease of the North-West Company, who had recently arrived from his station at the bottom of the Athabasca Lake. This gentleman, having passed several winters on the Mackenzie's River, and at the posts to the northward of Slave Lake, possessed considerable information respecting the Indians, and those parts of the country to which our inquiries were directed, which he very promptly and kindly communicated. During our

conversation, an old Chipewyan Indian, named the Rabbit's Head, entered the room, to whom Mr. Dease referred for information on some point. We found from his answer that he was a step-son of the late Chief Matonnabee, who had accompanied Mr. Hearne on his journey to the sea, and that he had himself been of the party, but being then a mere boy, he had forgotten many of the circumstances. He confirmed however, the leading incidents related by Hearne, and was positive he reached the sea, though he admitted that none of the party had tasted the water. He represented himself to be the only survivor of that party. As he was esteemed a good Indian, I presented him with a medal, which he received gratefully, and concluded a long speech upon the occasion, by assuring me he should preserve it carefully all his life. The old man afterwards became more communicative, and unsolicited began to relate the tradition of his tribe, respecting the discovery of the Copper Mine, which we thought amusing: and as the subject is somewhat connected with our future researches, I will insert the translation of it which was given at the time by Mr. Dease, though a slight mention of it has been made by Hearne.

"The Chipewyans suppose the Esquimaux originally inhabited some land to the northward

which is separated by the sea from this country; and that in the earliest ages of the world a party of these men came over and stole a woman from their tribe, whom they carried to this distant country and kept in a state of slavery. She was very unhappy in her situation, and effected her escape after many years residence among them. The forlorn creature wandered about, for some days, in a state of uncertainty what direction to take, when she chanced to fall upon a beaten path, which she followed and was led to the sea. At the sight of the ocean her hope of being able to return to her native country vanished, and she sat herself down in despair, and wept. A wolf now advanced to caress her, and having licked the tears from her eyes, walked into the water, and she perceived with joy that it did not reach up to the body of the animal; emboldened by this appearance, she instantly arose, provided two sticks to support herself, and determined on following the wolf. The first and second nights she proceeded on, without finding any increase in the depth of the water, and when fatigued, rested herself on the sticks, whose upper ends she fastened together for the purpose. She was alarmed on the third morning, by arriving at a deeper part, but resolved on going forward at any risk, rather than return; and her daring

perseverance was crowned with success, by her attaining her native shore on the fifth day. She fortunately came to a part where there was a beaten path, which she knew to be the track made by the rein-deer in their migrations. Here she halted and prepared some sort of weapon for killing them; as soon as this was completed, she had the gratification to behold several herds advancing along the road, and had the happiness of killing a sufficient number for her winter's subsistence, which she determined to pass at that place, and therefore formed a house for herself, after the manner she had learned from the Esquimaux. When spring came, and she emerged from her subterraneous dwelling, (for such the Chipewyans suppose it to have been,) she was astonished by observing a glittering appearance on a distant hill, which she knew was not produced by the reflection of the sun, and being at a loss to assign any other cause for it she resolved on going up to the shining object, and then found the hill was entirely composed of copper. She broke off several pieces, and finding it yielded so readily to her beating, it occurred to her that this metal would be very serviceable to her countrymen, if she could find them again. While she was meditating on what was to be done, the thought struck her that it

would be advisable to attach as many pieces of copper to her dress as she could, and then proceed into the interior, in search of some inhabitants, who, she supposed, would give her a favourable reception, on account of the treasure she had brought.

"It happened that she met her own relations, and the young men, elated with the account she had given of the hill, made her instantly return with them; which she was enabled to do, having taken the precaution of putting up marks to indicate the path. The party reached the spot in safety, but the story had a melancholy catastrophe. These youths overcome by excess of joy, gave loose to their passions, and offered the grossest insults to their benefactress. She powerfully resisted them for some time, and when her strength was failing, fled to the point of the mountain, as the only place of security. The moment she had gained the summit, the earth opened and ingulphed both herself and the mountain, to the utter dismay of the men, who were not more astonished at its sudden disappearance, than sorrowful for this just punishment of their wickedness. Ever since this event, the copper has only been found in small detached pieces on the surface of the earth."

On the 10th of May we were gratified by the

appearance of spring, though the ice remained firm on the lake. The anemone (pulsatilla, pasque flower,) appeared this day in flower, the trees began to put forth their leaves, and the musquitoes visited the warm rooms. On the 17th and 18th there were frequent showers of rain, and much thunder and lightning. This moist weather caused the ice to waste so rapidly, that by the 24th it had entirely disappeared from the lake. The gentlemen belonging to both the Companies quickly arrived from the different posts in this department, bringing their winter's collection of furs, which are forwarded from these establishments to the depôts.

I immediately waited on Mr. Colin Robertson, the agent of the Hudson's Company, and communicated to him, as I had done before to the several partners of the North-West Company, our plan, and the requisitions we should have to make on each Company, and I requested of all the gentlemen the favour of their advice and suggestions. As I perceived that the arrangement of their winter accounts, and other business, fully occupied them, I forbore further pressing the subject of our concerns for some days, until there was an appearance of despatching the first brigade of canoes. It then became necessary to urge their attention to them; but it was

evident, from the determined commercial opposition, and the total want of intercourse between the two Companies, that we could not expect to receive any cordial advice, or the assurance of the aid of both, without devising some expedient to bring the parties together. I therefore caused a tent to be pitched at a distance from both establishments, and solicited the gentlemen of both Companies to meet Mr. Back and myself there, for the purpose of affording us their combined assistance.

With this request they immediately complied; and on May 25th we were joined at the tent by Mr. Stuart and Mr. Grant, of the North-West Company, and Mr. Colin Robertson, of the Hudson's Bay Company, all of whom kindly gave very satisfactory answers to a series of questions which we had drawn up for the occasion, and promised all the aid in their power.

Furnished with the information thus obtained, we proceeded to make some arrangements respecting the obtaining of men, and the stores we should require for their equipment, as well as for presents to the Indians; and on the following day a requisition was made on the Companies for eight men each, and whatever useful stores they could supply. We learned with regret, that,

in consequence of the recent lavish expenditure of their goods in support of the opposition, their supply to us would, of necessity, be very limited. The men, too, were backward in offering their services, especially those of the Hudson's Bay Company, who demanded a much higher rate of wages than I considered it proper to grant.

*June* 3.—Mr. Smith, a partner of the North-West Company, arrived from the Great Slave Lake, bearing the welcome news that the principal Chief of the Copper Indians had received the communication of our arrival with joy, and given all the intelligence he possessed respecting the route to the sea-coast by the Copper-Mine River; and that he and a party of his men, at the instance of Mr. Wentzel, a clerk of the North-West Company, whom they wished might go along with them, had engaged to accompany the Expedition as guides and hunters. They were to wait our arrival at Fort Providence, on the north side of the Slave Lake. Their information coincided with that given by Beaulieu. They had no doubt of our being able to obtain the means of subsistence in travelling to the coast. This agreeable intelligence had a happy effect upon the Canadian voyagers, many of their fears being removed: several of

them seemed now disposed to volunteer; and indeed, on the same evening, two men from the North-West Company offered themselves and were accepted.

*June* 5.—This day Mr. Back and I went over to Fort Wedderburne, to see Mr. Robertson respecting his quota of men. We learned from him that, notwithstanding his endeavours to persuade them, his most experienced voyagers still declined engaging without very exorbitant wages. After some hesitation, however, six men engaged with us, who were represented to be active and steady; and I also got Mr. Robertson's permission for St. Germain, an interpreter belonging to this Company, to accompany us from Slave Lake if he should choose. The bow-men and steers-men were to receive one thousand six hundred livres Halifax per annum, and the middle men one thousand two hundred, exclusive of their necessary equipments; and they stipulated that their wages should be continued until their arrival in Montreal, or their rejoining the service of their present employers.

I delivered to Mr. Robertson an official request, that the stores we had left at York Factory and the Rock Depôt, with some other supplies, might be forwarded to Slave Lake by the first brigade of canoes which should come in. He

also took charge of my letters addressed to the Admiralty. Five men were afterwards engaged from the North-West Company for the same wages, and under the same stipulations as the others, besides an interpreter for the Copper Indians; but this man required three thousand livres Halifax currency, which we were obliged to give him, as his services were indispensable.

The extreme scarcity of provision at the posts rendered it necessary to despatch all our men to the Mammawee Lake, where they might procure their own subsistence by fishing. The women and children resident at the fort were also sent away for the same purpose; and no other families were permitted to remain at the houses after the departure of the canoes, than those belonging to the men who were required to carry on the daily duty.

The large party of officers and men, which had assembled here from the different posts in the department, was again quickly dispersed. The first brigade of canoes, laden with furs, was despatched to the depôt on May 30th, and the others followed in two or three days afterwards. Mr. Stuart, the senior partner of the North-West Company, quitted us for the same destination, on June 4th; Mr. Robertson, for his depôt, on the next day; and on the 9th we parted with our friend Mr. Keith, to whose unremitting kind-

ness we felt much indebted. I intrusted to his care a box containing some drawings by Mr. Back, the map of our route from Cumberland House, and the skin of a black beaver, (presented to the Expedition by Mr. Smith,) with my official letters, addressed to the Under Secretary of State. I wrote by each of these gentlemen to inform Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood of the scarcity of stores at these posts, and to request them to procure all they possibly could on their route. Mr. Smith was left in charge of this post during the summer; this gentleman soon evinced his desire to further our progress, by directing a new canoe to be built for our use, which was commenced immediately.

*June* 21.—This day an opportunity offered of sending letters to the Great Slave Lake; and I profited by it, to request Mr. Wentzel would accompany the Expedition agreeably to the desire of the Copper Indians, communicating to him that I had received permission for him to do so from the partners of the North-West Company. Should he be disposed to comply with my invitation, I desired that he would go over to Fort Providence, and remain near the Indians whom he had engaged for our service. I feared lest they should become impatient at our unexpected delay, and, with the usual fickleness of

the Indian character, remove from the establishment before we could arrive. It had been my intention to go to them myself, could the articles, with which they expected to be presented on my arrival, have been provided at these establishments; but as they could not be procured, I was compelled to defer my visit until our canoes should arrive. Mr. Smith supposed that my appearance amongst them, without the means of satisfying any of their desires, would give them an unfavourable impression respecting the Expedition, which would make them indifferent to exertion, if it did not even cause them to withdraw from their engagements.

The establishments at this place, Forts Chipewyan and Wedderburne, the chief posts of the Companies in this department, are conveniently situated for communicating with the Slave and Peace Rivers, from whence the canoes assemble in the spring and autumn; on the first occasion they bring the collection of furs which has been made at the different out-posts during the winter; and at the latter season they receive a supply of stores for the equipment of the Indians in their vicinity. Fort Wedderburne is a small house, which was constructed on Coal Island about five years ago, when the Hudson's Bay Company recommenced trading in this part of the country.

Fort Chipewyan has been built many years, and is an establishment of very considerable extent, conspicuously situated on a rocky point of the northern shore; it has a tower which can be seen at a considerable distance. This addition was made about eight years ago, to watch the motions of the Indians, who intended, as it was then reported, to destroy the house and all its inhabitants. They had been instigated to this rash design by the delusive stories of one among them, who had acquired great influence over his companions by his supposed skill in necromancy. This fellow had prophesied that there would soon be a complete change in the face of their country; that fertility and plenty would succeed to the present sterility; and that the present race of white inhabitants, unless they became subservient to the Indians, would be removed, and their place be filled by other traders, who would supply their wants in every possible manner. The poor deluded wretches, imagining they would hasten this happy change by destroying their present traders, of whose submission there was no prospect, threatened to extirpate them. None of these menaces, however, were put in execution. They were probably deterred from the attempt by perceiving that a most vigilant guard was kept against them.

The portion of this extensive lake which is near the establishments, is called " The Lake of the Hills," not improperly, as the northern shore and the islands are high and rocky. The south side, however, is quite level, consisting of alluvial land, subject to be flooded, lying betwixt the different mouths of the Elk River, and much intersected by water. The rocks of the northern shore are composed of syenite over which the soil is thinly spread; it is, however, sufficient to support a variety of firs and poplars, and many shrubs, lichens and mosses. The trees were now in full foliage, the plants generally in flower, and the whole scene quite enlivening. There can scarcely be a higher gratification than that which is enjoyed in this country in witnessing the rapid change which takes place in the course of a few days in the spring; scarcely does the snow disappear from the ground, before the trees are clothed with thick foliage, the shrubs open their leaves, and put forth their variegated flowers, and the whole prospect becomes animating. The spaces between the rocky hills, being for the most part swampy, support willows and a few poplars. These spots are the favourite resort of the musquitoes, which incessantly torment the unfortunate persons who have to pass through them.

Some of the hills attain an elevation of five or

six hundred feet, at the distance of a mile from the house; and from their summits a very picturesque view is commanded of the lake, and of the surrounding country. The land above the Great Point at the confluence of the main stream of the Elk River is six or seven hundred feet high, and stretches in a southern direction behind Pierre au Calumet. Opposite to that establishment, on the west side of the river, at some distance in the interior, the Bark Mountain rises and ranges to the N.W., until it reaches Clear Lake, about thirty miles to the southward of these forts, and then goes to the south-westward. The Cree Indians generally procure from this range their provision, as well as the bark for making their canoes. There is another range of hills on the south shore, which runs towards the Peace River.

The residents of these establishments depend for subsistence almost entirely on the fish which this lake affords; they are usually caught in sufficient abundance throughout the winter, though at the distance of eighteen miles from the houses; on the thawing of the ice, the fish remove into some smaller lakes, and the rivers on the south shore. Though they are nearer to the forts than in winter, it frequently happens that high winds prevent the canoes from transporting them thither, and the residents are kept in consequence with-

out a supply of food for two or three days together. The fish caught in the net are the attihhawmegh, trout, carp, methye, and pike*.

The traders also get supplied by the hunters with buffalo and moose deer meat, (which animals are found at some distance from the forts,) but the greater part of it is either in a dried state, or pounded ready for making pemmican; and is required for the men whom they keep travelling during the winter to collect the furs from the Indians, and for the crews of the canoes on their outward passage to the depôts in spring. There was a great want of provision this season, and both the Companies had much difficulty to provide a bare sufficiency, for their different brigades of canoes. Mr. Smith assured me that after the canoes had been despatched he had only five hundred pounds of meat remaining for the use of the men who might travel from the post during the summer, and that five years preceding, there had been thirty thousand pounds in store under similar circumstances. He ascribed this amazing difference more to the indolent habits which the Indians had acquired since the commercial struggle commenced, than to their recent sickness, mentioning in confirmation of his opinion that they

* See page 92.

could now, by the produce of little exertion, obtain whatever they demanded from either establishment.

At the opening of the water in spring, the Indians resort to the establishments to settle their accounts with the traders, and to procure the necessaries they require for the summer. This meeting is generally a scene of much riot and confusion, as the hunters receive such quantities of spirits as to keep them in a state of intoxication for several days. This spring, however, owing to the great deficiency of spirits, we had the gratification of seeing them generally sober. They belong to the great family of the Chipewyan, or Northern, Indians; dialects of their language being spoken in the Peace, and Mackenzie's Rivers, and by the populous tribes in New Caledonia, as ascertained by Sir Alexander Mackenzie in his journey to the Pacific. They style themselves generally *Dinneh* men, or Indians, but each tribe, or horde, adds some distinctive epithet taken from the name of the river, or lake, on which they hunt, or the district from which they last migrated. Those who come to Fort Chipewyan term themselves Saw-eessaw-dinneh, (Indians from the rising sun, or Eastern Indians,) their original hunting grounds being between the Athabasca, and Great Slave Lakes, and Churchill River. This

district, more particularly termed the Chipewyan lands, or *barren country*, is frequented by numerous herds of rein-deer, which furnish easy subsistence, and clothing to the Indians; but the traders endeavour to keep them in the parts to the westward where the beavers resort. There are about one hundred and sixty hunters who carry their furs to the Great Slave Lake, forty to Hay River, and two hundred and forty to Fort Chipewyan. A few Northern Indians also resort to the posts at the bottom of the Lake of the Hills, on Red Deer Lake, and to Churchill. The distance, however, of the latter post from their hunting grounds, and the sufferings to which they are exposed in going thither from want of food, have induced those who were formerly accustomed to visit it, to convey their furs to some nearer station.

These people are so minutely described by Hearne and Mackenzie, that little can be added by a passing stranger, whose observations were made during short interviews, and when they were at the forts, where they lay aside many of their distinguishing characteristics, and strive to imitate the manners of the voyagers and traders.

The Chipewyans are by no means prepossessing in appearance: they have broad faces,

projecting cheek-bones and wide nostrils; but they have generally good teeth, and fine eyes. When at the fort they imitate the dress of the Canadians, except that, instead of trowsers, they prefer the Indian stockings, which only reach from the thigh to the ancle, and in place of the waistband they have a piece of cloth round the middle which hangs down loosely before and behind. Their hunting dress consists of a leathern shirt and stockings, over which a blanket is thrown, the head being covered with a fur cap or band. Their manner is reserved, and their habits are selfish; they beg with unceasing importunity for every thing they see. I never saw men who either received or bestowed a gift with such bad grace; they almost snatch the thing from you in the one instance, and throw it at you in the other. It could not be expected that such men should display in their tents, the amiable hospitality which prevails generally amongst the Indians of this country. A stranger may go away hungry from their lodges, unless he possess sufficient impudence to thrust, uninvited, his knife into the kettle, and help himself. The owner, indeed, never deigns to take any notice of such an act of rudeness, except by a frown, it being beneath the dignity of a hunter, to make disturbance about a piece of meat.

As some relief to the darker shades of their character it should be stated that instances of theft are extremely rare amongst them. They profess strong affection for their children, and some regard for their relations, who are often numerous, as they trace very far the ties of consanguinity. A curious instance of the former was mentioned to us, and so well authenticated, that I shall venture to give it in the words of Dr. Richardson's Journal.

" A young Chipewyan had separated from the rest of his band for the purpose of trenching beaver, when his wife, who was his sole companion, and in her first pregnancy, was seized with the pains of labour. She died on the third day after she had given birth to a boy. The husband was inconsolable, and vowed in his anguish never to take another woman to wife, but his grief was soon in some degree absorbed in anxiety for the fate of his infant son. To preserve its life he descended to the office of nurse, so degrading in the eyes of a Chipewyan, as partaking of the duties of a woman. He swaddled it in soft moss, fed it with broth made from the flesh of the deer, and to still its cries applied it to his breast, praying earnestly to the great Master of Life, to assist his endeavours. The force of the powerful passion by which he was actuated produced the

same effect in his case, as it has done in some others which are recorded: a flow of milk actually took place from his breast. He succeeded in rearing his child, taught him to be a hunter, and when he attained the age of manhood, chose him a wife from the tribe. The old man kept his vow in never taking a second wife himself, but he delighted in tending his son's children, and when his daughter-in-law used to interfere, saying, that it was not the occupation of a man, he was wont to reply, that he had promised to the great Master of Life, if his child were spared, never to be proud, like the other Indians. He used to mention, too, as a certain proof of the approbation of Providence, that although he was always obliged to carry his child on his back while hunting, yet that it never roused a moose by its cries, being always particularly still at those times. Our informant* added that he had often seen this Indian in his old age, and that his left breast, even then, retained the unusual size it had acquired in his occupation of nurse."

We had proof of their sensibility towards their relations, in their declining to pitch their tents where they had been accustomed for many years, alleging a fear of being reminded of the

* Mr. Wentzel,

happy hours they had formerly spent there, in the society of the affectionate relatives whom the sickness had recently carried off. The change of situation, however, had not the effect of relieving them from sorrowful impressions, and they occasionly indulged in very loud lamentations, as they sat in groups, within and without their tents. Unfortunately, the spreading of a severe dysentery amongst them, at this time, gave occasion for the renewal of their grief. The medicinal charms of drumming and singing were plentifully applied, and once they had recourse to conjuring over a sick person. I was informed, however, that the Northern Indians do not make this expedient for the cure of a patient so often as the Crees; but when they do, the conjuror is most assiduous, and suffers great personal fatigue. Particular persons only, are trained in the mysteries of the art of conjuring, to procure the recovery of the sick, or to disclose future events.

On extraordinary occasions the man remains in his narrow conjuring tent, for days without eating, before he can determine the matter to his satisfaction. When he is consulted about the sick, the patient is shut up with him; but on other occasions he is alone, and the poor creature often works his mind up to a pitch of illusion that can scarcely be imagined by one who has not

witnessed it. His deluded companions seat themselves round his tent, and await his communication with earnest anxiety, yet during the progress of his manœuvres, they often venture to question him, as to the disposition of the Great Spirit.

These artful fellows usually gain complete ascendancy over the minds of their companions. They are supported by voluntary contributions of provision, that their minds may not be diverted by the labour of hunting, from the peculiar duties of their profession.

The chiefs among the Chipewyans are now totally without power. The presents of a flag, and a gaudy dress, still bestowed upon them by the traders, do not procure for them any respect or obedience, except from the youths of their own families. This is to be attributed mainly to their living at peace with their neighbours, and to the facility which the young men find it getting their wants supplied independent of the recommendation of the chiefs, which was formerly required. In war excursions, boldness and intrepidity would still command respect and procure authority; but the influence thus acquired would, probably, cease with the occasion that called it forth. The traders, however, endeavour to support their authority by continuing towards them the accustomed marks

of respect, hoisting the flag and firing a salute of musketry on their entering the fort.

The chief halts at a distance from the house, and despatches one of his young men to announce his approach, and to bring his flag, which is carried before him when he arrives. The messenger carries back to him some vermilion to ornament the faces of his party, together with a looking-glass and comb, some tobacco, and a few rounds of ammunition, that they may return the salute. These men paint round the eyes, the forehead, and the cheek-bones.

The Northern Indians evince no little vanity, by assuming to themselves the comprehensive title of "The People," whilst they designate all other nations by the name of their particular country. If men were seen at a distance, and a Chipewyan was asked who those persons were, he would answer, The People, if he recognised them to belong to his tribe, and never Chipewyans; but he would give them their respective names, if they were Europeans, Canadians, or Cree Indians.

As they suppose their ancestors to come originally from the east, those who happen to be born in the eastern part of their territory, are considered to be of the purest race. I have been

informed, that all the Indians who trade at the different posts in the north-west parts of America, imagine that their forefathers came from the east, except the Dog-ribs, who reside between the Copper Indian Islands and the Mackenzie's River, and who deduce their origin from the west, which is the more remarkable, as they speak a dialect of the Chipewyan language. I could gather no information respecting their religious opinions, except that they have a tradition of the deluge.

The Chipewyans are considered to be less expert hunters than the Crees, which probably arises from their residing much on the barren lands, where the rein-deer are so numerous that little skill is requisite. A good hunter, however, is highly esteemed among them. The facility of procuring goods, since the commercial opposition commenced, has given great encouragement to their native indolence of disposition, as is manifested by the difference in the amount of their collections of furs and provision between the late and former years. From six to eight hundred packs of furs used formerly to be sent from this department, now the return seldom exceeds half that amount. The decrease in the provision has been already mentioned.

The Northern Indians suppose that they originally sprang from a dog; and about five years

ago, a superstitious fanatic so strongly pressed upon their minds the impropriety of employing these animals, to which they were related, for purposes of labour, that they universally resolved against using them any more, and, strange as it may seem, destroyed them. They now have to drag every thing themselves on sledges. This laborious task falls most heavily on the women; nothing can more shock the feelings of a person accustomed to civilized life, than to witness the state of their degradation. When a party is on a march the women have to drag the tent, the meat, and whatever the hunter possesses, whilst he only carries his gun and medicine case. In the evening they form the encampment, cut wood, fetch water, and prepare the supper; and then, perhaps, are not permitted to partake of the fare until the men have finished. A successful hunter sometimes has two or three wives; whoever happens to be the favourite, assumes authority over the others, and has the management of the tent. These men usually treat their wives unkindly, and even with harshness; except, indeed, when they are about to increase the family, and then they shew them much indulgence.

Hearne charges the Chipewyans with the dreadful practice of abandoning, in extremity,

their aged and sick people. The only instance that came under our personal notice was attended with some palliating circumstances:—An old woman arrived at Fort Chipewyan, during our residence, with her son, a little boy, about ten years old, both of whom had been deserted by their relations, and left in an encampment, when much reduced by sickness: two or three days after their departure the woman gained a little strength, and with the assistance of the boy, was enabled to paddle a canoe to the fishing station of this post, where they were supported for some days, until they were enabled to proceed in search of some other relations, who, they expected, would treat them with more kindness. I learned, that the woman bore an extremely bad character, having even been guilty of infanticide, and that her companions considered her offences merited the desertion.

This tribe, since its present intimate connexion with the traders, has discontinued its war excursions against the Esquimaux, but they still speak of that nation in terms of the most inveterate hatred. We have only conversed with four men who have been engaged in any of those expeditions; all these confirm the statements of Blackmeat respecting the sea-coast. Our observations concerning the half-breed population in this

vicinity, coincided so exactly with those which have been given of similar persons in Dr. Richardson's account of the Crees, that any statement respecting them at this place is unnecessary. Both the Companies have wisely prohibited their servants from intermarrying with pure Indian women, which was formerly the cause of many quarrels with the tribes.

The weather was extremely variable during the month of June; we scarcely had two clear days in succession, and the showers of rain were frequent; the winds were often strong, and generally blowing from the north-east quarter. On the evening of the 16th the Aurora Borealis was visible, but after that date the nights were too light for our discerning it.

The musquitoes swarmed in great numbers about the house, and tormented us so incessantly by their irritating stings, that we were compelled to keep our rooms constantly filled with smoke, which is the only means of driving them away: the weather indeed was now warm. Having received one of Dollond's eighteen-inch spirit thermometers from Mr. Stuart, which he had the kindness to send us from his post at Pierre au Calumet, after he had learned that ours had been rendered useless, I observed the temperature, at noon, on the 25th of June, to be 63°.

On the following morning we made an excursion, accompanied by Mr. Smith, round the fishing stations on the south side of the lake, for the purpose of visiting our men; we passed several groups of women and children belonging to both the forts, posted wherever they could find a sufficiently dry spot for an encampment. At length we came to our men, pitched upon a narrow strip of land, situated between two rivers. Though the portion of dry ground did not exceed fifty yards, yet they appeared to be living very comfortably, having formed huts with the canoe's sail and covering, and were amply supported by the fish their nets daily furnished. They sometimes had a change in their fare, by procuring a few ducks and other water-fowl, which resort in great abundance to the marshes, by which they were surrounded.

*July* 2.—The canoe, which was ordered to be built for our use, was finished. As it was constructed after the manner, described by Hearne, and several of the American travellers, a detail of the process will be unnecessary. Its extreme length was thirty two feet six inches, including the bow and stern pieces, its greatest breadth was four feet ten inches, but it was only two feet nine inches forward where the bowman sat, and two feet four inches be-

hind where the steersman was placed; and its depth was one foot eleven and a quarter inches. There were seventy-three hoops of thin cedar, and a layer of slender laths of the same wood within the frame. These feeble vessels of bark will carry twenty-five pieces of goods, each weighing ninety pounds, exclusive of the necessary provision and baggage for the crew of five or six men, amounting in the whole to about three thousand three hundred pounds' weight. This great lading they annually carry between the depôts and the posts, in the interior; and it rarely happens that any accidents occur, if they be managed by experienced bowmen and steersmen, on whose skill the safety of the canoe entirely depends in the rapids and difficult places. When a total portage is made, these two men carry the canoe, and they often run with it, though its weight is estimated at about three hundred pounds, exclusive of the poles and oars, which are occasionally left in where the distance is short.

On the 5th, we made an excursion for the purpose of trying our canoe. A heavy gale came on in the evening, which caused a great swell in the lake, and in crossing the waves we had the satisfaction to find that our birchen vessel proved an excellent sea-boat.

*July* 7.—This morning some men, and their families, who had been sent off to search for Indians with whom they intended to pass the summer, returned to the fort in consequence of a serious accident having befallen their canoe in the Red Deer River; when they were in the act of hauling up a strong rapid, the line broke, the canoe was overturned, and two of the party narrowly escaped drowning; fortunately the women and children happened to be on shore, or, in all probability, they would have perished in the confusion of the scene. Nearly all their stores, their guns and fishing nets, were lost, and they could not procure any other food for the last four days than some unripe berries.

Some gentlemen arrived in the evening with a party of Chipewyan Indians, from Hay River, a post between the Peace River, and the Great Slave Lake. These men gave distressing accounts of sickness among their relatives, and the Indians in general along the Peace River, and they said many of them have died. The disease was described as dysentery. On the 10th and 11th we had very sultry weather, and were dreadfully tormented by musquitoes. The highest temperature was 73°.

*July* 13.—This morning Mr. Back and I had the sincere gratification of welcoming our long-

separated friends, Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood, who arrived in perfect health with two canoes, having made a very expeditious journey from Cumberland, notwithstanding they were detained near three days in consequence of the melancholy loss of one of their bowmen, by the upsetting of a canoe in a strong rapid; but, as the occurrences of this journey, together with the mention of some other circumstances that happened previous to their departure from Cumberland, which have been extracted from Mr. Hood's narrative, will appear in the following chapter, it will be unnecessary to enter farther into these points now.

The zeal and talent displayed by Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood, in the discharge of their several duties since my separation from them, drew forth my highest approbation. These gentlemen had brought all the stores they could procure from the establishments at Cumberland and Isle à la Crosse; and at the latter place they had received ten bags of pemmican from the North-West Company, which proved to be mouldy, and so totally unfit for use, that it was left at the Methye Portage. They got none from the Hudson's Bay Post. The voyagers belonging to that Company, being destitute of provision, had eaten what was intended for us. In consequence of these untoward circumstances, the canoes arrived

with only one day's supply of this most essential article. The prospect of having to commence our journey from hence, almost destitute of provision, and scantily supplied with stores, was distressing to us, and very discouraging to the men. It was evident, however, that any unnecessary delay here would have been very imprudent, as Fort Chipewyan did not, at the present time, furnish the means of subsistence for so large a party, much less was there a prospect of our receiving any supply to carry us forward. We, therefore, hastened to make the necessary arrangements for our speedy departure. All the stores were demanded that could possibly be spared from both the establishments; and we rejoiced to find, that when this collection was added to the articles that had been brought up by the canoes, we had a sufficient quantity of clothing for the equipment of the men who had been engaged here, as well as to furnish a present to the Indians, besides some few goods for the winter's consumption; but we could not procure any ammunition, which was the most essential article, or spirits, and but little tobacco.

We then made a final arrangement respecting the voyagers, who were to accompany the party; and, fortunately, there was no difficulty in doing

this, as Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood had taken the very judicious precaution of bringing up ten men from Cumberland, who were engaged to proceed forward if their services were required. The Canadians, whom they brought, were most desirous of being continued, and we felt sincere pleasure in being able to keep men who were so zealous in the cause, and who had given proofs of their activity on their recent passage to this place, by discharging those men who were less willing to undertake the journey; of these, three were Englishmen, one American, and three Canadians. When the numbers were completed, which we had been recommended by the traders to take as a protection against the Esquimaux, we had sixteen Canadian-voyagers, and our worthy and only English attendant John Hepburn, besides the two interpreters whom we were to receive at the Great Slave Lake; we were also accompanied by a Chipewyan woman. An equipment of goods was given to each of the men who had been engaged at this place, similar to what had been furnished to the others at Cumberland; and when this distribution had been made, the remainder were made up into bales, preparatory to our departure, on the following day. We were cheerfully assisted in these and all our occupa-

tions by Mr. Smith, who evinced an anxious desire to supply our wants as far as his means permitted,

Mr. Hood having brought up the dipping needle from Cumberland House, we ascertained the dip to be 85° 23′ 42″, and the difference produced by reversing the face of the instrument was 6° 2′ 10″. The intensity of the magnetic force was also observed. Several observations had been procured on both sides of the moon during our residence at Fort Chipewyan, the result of which gave for its longitude 111° 18′ 20″ W., its latitude was observed to be 58° 42′ 38″ N., and the variation of the compass 22° 49′ 32″ E. Fresh rates were procured for the chronometers and their errors determined for Greenwich time, by which the survey to the northward was carried on.

## CHAPTER VI.

**Mr. Hood's journey to the Basquiau Hill—Sojourns with an Indian Party—His Journey to Chipewyan.**

1820. March. BEING desirous of obtaining a drawing of a moose-deer, and also of making some observation on the height of the Aurora, I set out on the 23d, to pass a few days at the Basquiau Hill. Two men accompanied me, with dogs and sledges, who were going to the hill for meat. We found the Saskatchawan open and were obliged to follow it several miles to the eastward. We did not, then, cross it without wading in water, which had overflowed the ice; and our snow-shoes were encumbered with a heavy weight for the remainder of the day. On the south bank of the Saskatchawan were some poplars ten or twelve feet in circumference at the root. Beyond the river, we traversed an extensive swamp, bounded by woods. In the evening we crossed the Swan Lake, about six miles in breadth, and eight in length, and halted on its south side for the night, twenty-four miles S.S.W. of Cumberland House.

At four in the morning of the 24th we continued the journey, and crossed some creeks in the woods, and another large swamp. These swamps are covered with water in summer, to the depth of several feet, which arises from the melted snow from the higher grounds. The tracks of foxes, wolves, wolverenes, and martens, were very numerous. The people employed in carrying meat, set traps on their way out, and take possession of their captures at their return, for which they receive a sum from the Company, proportioned to the value of the fur.

In the evening we crossed the Goose Lake, which is a little longer than Swan Lake, and afterwards the River Sepanach, a branch of the Saskatchawan, forming an island extending thirty miles above, and forty below Cumberland House. We turned to the westward on the Root River, which enters the Sepanach, and halted on its banks having made in direct distance not more than twenty miles since the 23rd.

We passed the Shoal Lake on the 25th, and then marched twelve miles through woods and swamps to a hunting tent of the Indians. It was situated in a grove of large poplars, and would have been no unpleasant residence if we could have avoided the smoke. A heavy gale from the westward, with snow, confined us for several

days to this tent. On the 30th two Indians arrived, one of whom named the Warrior, was well known at the house. We endeavoured to prevail upon them to set out in quest of moose, which they agreed to do on receiving some rum. Promises were of no avail; the smallest present gratification is preferred to the certainty of ample reward at another period; an unfailing indication of strong animal passions, and a weak understanding. On our compliance with their demand they departed.

The next day, I went to the Warrior's tent, distant about eleven miles. The country was materially changed: the pine had disappeared, and gentle slopes, with clumps of large poplars, formed some pleasing groups: willows were scattered over the swamps. When I entered the tent, the Indians spread a buffalo robe before the fire, and desired me to sit down. Some were eating, others sleeping, many of them without any covering except the breech cloth and a blanket over the shoulders; a state in which they love to indulge themselves till hunger drives them forth to the chase. Besides the Warrior's family, there was that of another hunter named *Long-legs*, whose bad success in hunting had reduced him to the necessity of feeding on moose leather for three weeks when he was compassionately re-

lieved by the Warrior. I was an unwilling witness of the preparation of my dinner by the Indian women. They cut into pieces a portion of fat meat, using for that purpose a knife and their teeth. It was boiled in a kettle, and served in a platter made of birch bark, from which, being dirty, they had peeled the surface. However, the flavour of good moose meat will survive any process that it undergoes in their hands, except smoking.

Having provided myself with some drawing materials, I amused the Indians with a sketch of the interior of the tent and its inhabitants. An old woman, who was relating with great volubility an account of some quarrel with the traders at Cumberland House, broke off from her narration when she perceived my design; supposing, perhaps, that I was employing some charm against her; for the Indians have been taught a supernatural dread of particular pictures. One of the young men drew, with a piece of charcoal, a figure resembling a frog, on the side of the tent, and by significantly pointing at me, excited peals of merriment from his companions. The caricature was comic; but I soon fixed their attention, by producing my pocket compass, and affecting it with a knife. They have great curiosity, which might easily be directed to the attainment of useful

knowledge. As the dirt accumulated about these people was visibly of a communicative nature, I removed at night into the open air, where the thermometer fell to 15° below zero, although it was the next day 60° above it.

In the morning the Warrior and his companion arrived; I found that, instead of hunting, they had passed the whole time in a drunken fit, at a short distance from the tent. In reply to our angry questions, the Warrior held out an empty vessel, as if to demand the payment of a debt, before he entered into any new negotiation. Not being inclined to starve his family, we set out for another Indian tent, ten miles to the southward, but we found only the frame, or tent poles, standing, when we reached the spot. The men, by digging where the fire-place had been, ascertained that the Indians had quitted it the day before; and as their marches are short, when encumbered with the women and baggage, we sought out their track, and followed it. At an abrupt angle of it, which was obscured by trees, the men suddenly disappeared; and hastening forward to discover the cause, I perceived them both still rolling at the foot of a steep cliff, over which they had been dragged while endeavouring to stop the descent of their sledges. The dogs were gazing silently, with the wreck of their

harness about them, and the sledges deeply buried in the snow. The effects of this accident did not detain us long, and we proceeded afterwards with greater caution.

The air was warm at noon, and the solitary but sweet notes of the jay, the earliest spring bird, were in every wood. Late in the evening we descried the ravens wheeling in circles round a small grove of poplars, and, according to our expectations, found the Indians encamped there.

The men were absent hunting, and returned unsuccessful. They had been several days without provisions, and thinking that I could depend upon the continuance of their exertions, I gave them a little rum; the next day they set out, and at midnight they swept by us with their dogs in close pursuit.

In the morning we found that a moose had eaten the bark of a tree near our fire. The hunters, however, again failed; and they attributed the extreme difficulty of approaching the chase, to the calmness of the weather, which enabled it to hear them at a great distance.

They concluded, as usual, when labouring under any affliction, that they were tormented by the evil spirit; and assembled to beat a large tambourine, and sing an address to the Manito, or deity, praying for relief, according to the

explanation which I received; but their prayer consisted of only three words, constantly repeated. One of the hunters yet remained abroad; and as the wind rose at noon, we had hopes that he was successful. In the evening he made his appearance, and announcing that he had killed a large moose, immediately secured the reward which had been promised.

The tidings were received with apparent indifference, by people whose lives are alternate changes from the extremity of want to abundance. But as their countenances seldom betray their emotions, it cannot be determined whether their apathy is real or affected. However, the women prepared their sledges and dogs, with the design of dismembering, and bringing home, the carcass: a proceeding to which, in their necessitous condition, I could have had neither reasonable nor available objections, without giving them a substitute. By much solicitation I obtained an audience, and offered them our own provisions, on condition of their suspending the work of destruction till the next day. They agreed to the proposition, and we set out with some Indians for the place where the animal was lying. The night advancing, we were separated by a snow-storm, and not being skilful enough to follow tracks which were so speedily filled up,

I was bewildered for several hours in the woods, when I met with an Indian, who led me back at such a pace that I was always in the rear, to his infinite diversion. The Indians are vain of their local knowledge, which is certainly very wonderful. Our companions had taken out the entrails and young of the moose, which they buried in the snow.

The Indians then returned to the tents, and one of my men accompanied them; he was the person charged with the management of the trade at the hunting tent; and he observed, that the opportunity of making a bargain with the Indians, while they were drinking, was too advantageous to be lost.

It remained for us to prevent the wolves from mangling the moose; for which purpose we wrapped ourselves in blankets between its feet, and placed the hatchets within our reach. The night was stormy, and apprehension kept me long awake; but finding my companion in so deep a sleep, that nothing could have roused him, except the actual gripe of a wolf, I thought it advisable to imitate his example, as much as was in my power, rather than bear the burthen of anxiety alone. At day-light we shook off the snow, which was heaped upon us, and endeavoured to kindle a fire; but the violence of

the storm defeated all our attempts. At length two Indians arrived, with whose assistance we succeeded, and they took possession of it, to show their sense of our obligations to them. We were ashamed of the scene before us; the entrails of the moose and its young, which had been buried at our feet, bore testimony to the nocturnal revel of the wolves, during the time we had slept. This was a fresh subject of derision for the Indians, whose appetites, however, would not suffer them to waste long upon us a time so precious. They soon finished what the wolves had begun, and with as little aid from the art of cookery, eating both the young moose, and the contents of the paunch, raw.

I had scarcely secured myself by a lodge of branches from the snow, and placed the moose in a position for my sketch, when we were stormed by a troop of women and children, with their sledges and dogs. We obtained another short respite from the Indians, but our blows could not drive, nor their caresses entice, the hungry dogs from the tempting feast before them.

I had not finished my sketch, before the impatient crowd tore the moose to pieces, and loaded their sledges with meat. On our way to the tent, a black wolf rushed out upon an Indian, who happened to pass near its den. It was shot;

and the Indians carried away three black whelps, to improve the breed of their dogs. I purchased one of them, intending to send it to England, but it perished for want of proper nourishment.

The latitude of these tents, was 53° 12′ 46″ N., and longitude by chronometers 103° 13′ 10″ W. On the 5th of April we set out for the hunting tent by our former track, and arrived there in the evening.

As the increasing warmth of the weather had threatened to interrupt communication by removing the ice, orders had been sent from Cumberland House to the people at the tent, to quit it without delay; which we did on the 7th. Some altitudes of the Aurora were obtained.

We had a fine view, at sunrise, of the Basquiau Hill, skirting half the horizon with its white sides, chequered by forests of pine. It is seen from Pine Island Lake, at the distance of fifty miles; and cannot, therefore, be less than three-fourths of a mile in perpendicular height; probably the greatest elevation between the Atlantic Ocean, and the Rocky Mountains.

A small stream runs near the hunting tent, strongly impregnated with salt. There are several salt springs about it, which are not frozen during the winter

The surface of the snow, thawing in the sun, and freezing at night, had become a strong crust, which sometimes gave way in a circle round our feet, immersing us in the soft snow beneath. The people were afflicted with snow blindness; a kind of ophthalmia occasioned by the reflection of the sun's rays in the spring.

The miseries endured during the first journey of this nature, are so great, that nothing could induce the sufferer to undertake a second, while under the influence of present pain. He feels his frame crushed by unaccountable pressure, he drags a galling and stubborn weight at his feet, and his track is marked with blood. The dazzling scene around him affords no rest to his eye, no object to divert his attention from his own agonizing sensations. When he arises from sleep, half his body seems dead, till quickened into feeling by the irritation of his sores. But fortunately for him, no evil makes an impression so evanescent as pain. It cannot be wholly banished, nor recalled with the force of reality, by any act of the mind, either to affect our determinations, or to sympathize with another. The traveller soon forgets his sufferings, and at every future journey their recurrence is attended with diminished acuteness.

It was not before the 10th or 12th of April,

that the return of the swans, geese, and ducks, gave certain indications of the advance of spring. The juice of the maple-tree began to flow, and the women repaired to the woods for the purpose of collecting it. This tree which abounds to the southward, is not, I believe found to the northward of the Saskatchawan. The Indians obtain the sap by making incisions into the tree. They boil it down, and evaporate the water, skimming off the impurities. They are so fond of sweets that after this simple process, they set an extravagant price upon it.

On the 15th fell the first shower of rain we had seen for six months, and on the 17th the thermometer rose to 77° in the shade. The whole face of the country was deluged by the melted snow. All the nameless heaps of dirt, accumulated in the winter, now floated over the very thresholds, and the long-imprisoned scents dilated into vapours so penetrating, that no retreat was any security from them. The flood descended into the cellar below our house, and destroyed a quantity of powder and tea; a loss irreparable in our situation.

The noise made by the frogs which this inundation produced, is almost incredible. There is strong reason to believe that they outlive the severity of winter. They have often been found

frozen and revived by warmth, nor is it possible that the multitude which incessantly filled our ears with its discordant notes could have been matured in two or three days.

The fishermen at Beaver Lake, and the other detached parties were ordered to return to the post. The expedients to which the poor people were reduced, to cross a country so beset with waters, presented many uncouth spectacles. The inexperienced were glad to compromise, with the loss of property, for the safety of their persons, and astride upon ill-balanced rafts with which they struggled to be uppermost, exhibited a ludicrous picture of distress. Happy were they who could patch up an old canoe, though obliged to bear it half the way on their shoulders, through miry bogs and interwoven willows. But the veteran trader, wedged in a box of skin, with his wife, children, dogs, and furs, wheeled triumphantly through the current, and deposited his heterogeneous cargo safely on the shore. The woods re-echoed with the return of their exiled tenants. An hundred tribes, as gaily dressed as any burnished natives of the south, greeted our eyes in our accustomed walks, and their voices, though unmusical, were the sweetest that ever saluted our ears.

From the 19th to the 26th the snow once

more blighted the resuscitating verdure, but a single day was sufficient to remove it. On the 28th the Saskatchawan swept away the ice which had adhered to its banks, and on the morrow a boat came down from Carlton House with provisions. We received such accounts of the state of vegetation at that place, that Dr. Richardson determined to visit it, in order to collect botanical specimens, as the period at which the ice was expected to admit of the continuation of our journey was still distant. Accordingly he embarked on the 1st of May.

In the course of the month the ice gradually wore away from the south side of the lake, but the great mass of it still hung to the north side with some snow visible on its surface. By the 21st the elevated grounds were perfectly dry, and teeming with the fragrant offspring of the season. When the snow melted, the earth was covered with the fallen leaves of the last year, and already it was green with the strawberry plant, and the bursting buds of the gooseberry, raspberry, and rose bushes, soon variegated by the rose and the blossoms of the choke cherry. The gifts of nature are disregarded and undervalued till they are withdrawn, and in the hideous regions of the Arctic Zone, she would make a convert of him for whom the gardens of Europe had no charms,

or the mild beauties of a southern climate had bloomed in vain.

Mr. Williams found a delightful occupation in his agricultural pursuits. The horses were brought to the plough, and fields of wheat, barley, and Indian corn, promised to reward his labours. His dairy furnished us with all the luxuries of an English farm.

On the 25th the ice departed from Pine Island Lake. We were, however, informed that Beaver Lake, which was likewise in our route, would not afford a passage before the 4th of June. According to directions left by Mr. Franklin, applications were made to the Chiefs of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies' Posts, for two canoes, with their crews, and a supply of stores, for the use of the Expedition. They were not in a condition to comply with this request till the arrival of their respective returns from Isle à la Crosse and the Saskatchawan Departments. Of the six men whom we brought from England, the most serviceable, John Hepburn, had accompanied Mr. Franklin, and only one other desired to prosecute the journey with us. Mr. Franklin had made arrangements with Mr. Williams for the employment of the remaining five men in bringing to Cumberland House the ammunition, tobacco, *&c.*, left at York Fort, which stores were, if pos-

sible, to be sent after us in the summer. On the 30th Dr. Richardson returned from Carlton House, and on the 31st the boats arrived belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company's Saskatchawan Department. We obtained a canoe and two more volunteers. On the 1st of June the Saskatchawan, swelled by the melting of the snow near the Rocky Mountains, rose twelve feet, and the current of the little rivers bounding Pine Island ran back into the lake, which it filled with mud.

On the 5th the North-West Company's people arrived, and Mr. Conolly furnished us with a canoe and five Canadians. They were engaged to attend us till Mr. Franklin should think fit to discharge them, and bound under the usual penalties in case of disobedience, or other improper conduct. These poor people entertained such dread of a ship of war, that they stipulated not to be embarked in Lieutenant Parry's vessels, if we should find them on the coast; a condition with which they would gladly have dispensed, had that desirable event taken place. As we required a Canadian foreman and steersman for the other canoe, we were compelled to wait for the appearance of the Isle à la Crosse canoes under Mr. Clark.

On the 8th Mr. Williams embarked for York Fort. He gave us a circular letter addressed to

the Chiefs of the Hudson's Bay Company's Posts, directing them to afford us all possible assistance on our route, and he promised to exert every endeavour to forward the Esquimaux interpreter, upon whom the success of our journey so much depended. He was accompanied by eight boats. With him we sent our collections of plants, minerals, charts, and drawings, to be transmitted to England by the Hudson's Bay ships. After this period, our detention, though short, cost us more vexation than the whole time we had passed at Cumberland House, because every hour of the short summer was invaluable to us. On the 11th Mr. Clark arrived, and completed our crews. —He brought letters from Mr. Franklin, dated March 28th, at Fort Chipewyan, where he was engaged procuring hunters and interpreters. A heavy storm of wind and rain from the north-east again delayed us till the morning of the 13th. The account we had received at York Factory of the numerous stores at Cumberland House proved to be very erroneous. The most material stores we received did not amount, in addition to our own, to more than two barrels of powder, a keg of spirits, and two pieces of tobacco, with pemmican for sixteen days.

The crew of Dr. Richardson's canoe consisted of three Englishmen and three Canadians, and

the other carried five Canadians; both were deeply laden and the waves ran high on the lake. No person in our party being well acquainted with the rivers to the northward, Mr. Conolly gave us a pilot, on condition that we should exchange him when we met with the Athabasca brigade of canoes. At four A.M. we embarked.

We soon found that birchen-bark canoes were not calculated to brave rough weather on a large lake, for we were compelled to land on the opposite border, to free them from the water which had already saturated their cargoes. The wind became more moderate, and we were enabled, after traversing a chain of smaller lakes, to enter the mouth of the Sturgeon River, at sunset, where we encamped.

The lading of the canoes is always, if possible carried on shore at night, and the canoes taken out of the water. The following evening we reached Beaver Lake, and landed to repair some damages sustained by the canoes. A round stone will displace the lading of a canoe, without doing any injury, but a slight blow against a sharp corner penetrates the bark. For the purpose of repairing it, a small quantity of gum or pitch, bark and pine roots, are embarked, and the business is so expeditiously performed, that the speed of the canoe amply compensates for every delay. The Sturgeon River is justly called

by the Canadians La Riviére Maligne, from its numerous and dangerous rapids. Against the strength of a rapid it is impossible to effect any progress by paddling, and the canoes are tracked, or if the bank will not admit of it; propelled with poles, in the management of which the Canadians shew great dexterity. Their simultaneous motions were strongly contrasted with the awkward confusion of the inexperienced Englishmen, deafened by the torrent, who sustained the blame of every accident which occurred.

At sunset we encamped on an island in Beaver Lake, and at four A.M., the next morning, passed the first portage in the Ridge River. Beaver Lake is twelve miles in length, and six in breadth. The flat limestone country rises into bold rocks on its banks, and at the mouth of the Ridge River, the limestone discontinues. The lake is very deep, and has already been noticed for the number and excellence of its fish, The Ridge River is rapid and shallow. We had emerged from the muddy channels through an alluvial soil, and the primitive rocks interrupted our way with frequent portages, through the whole route to Isle à la Crosse Lake. At two P.M. we passed the mouth of the Hay river, running from the westward; and the ridge above its confluence takes the name of the Great River, which rises at the height of land called the Frog Portage.

The thermometer was this day 100° in the sun, and the heat was extremely oppressive, from our constant exposure to it. We crossed three portages in the Great River, and encamped at the last; here we met the director of the North-West Company's affairs in the north, Mr. Stuart, on his way to Fort William, in a light canoe. He had left the Athabasca Lake only thirteen days, and brought letters from Mr. Franklin, who desired that we would endeavour to collect stores of every kind at Isle à la Crosse, and added a favourable account of the country, to the northward of the Slave Lake.

On the 16th, at three A.M., we continued our course, the river increasing to the breadth of half a mile, with many rapids between the rocky islands. The banks were luxuriantly clothed with pines, poplars, and birch trees, of the largest size: but the different shades of green were undistinguishable at a distance, and the glow of autumnal colours was wanting to render the variety beautiful.

Having crossed two portages at the different extremities of the Island Lake, we ran under sail through two extensive sheets of water, called the Heron and Pelican Lakes; the former of which is fifteen miles in length, and the latter five; but its extent to the southward has not been

explored. An intricate channel, with four small portages, conducted us to the Woody Lake. Its borders were, indeed, walls of pines, hiding the face of steep and high rocks; and we wandered in search of a landing-place till ten P.M., when we were forced to take shelter from an impending storm, on a small island where we wedged ourselves between the trees. But though we secured the canoes, we incurred a personal evil of much greater magnitude, in the torments inflicted by the musquitoes, a plague which had grown upon us since our departure from Cumberland House, and which infested us during the whole summer; we found no relief from their attacks by exposing ourselves to the utmost violence of the wind and rain. Our last resource was to plunge ourselves in the water, and from this uncomfortable situation we gladly escaped at day-light, and hoisted our sails.

The Woody Lake is thirteen miles in length, and a small grassy channel at its north-western extremity, leads to the Frog Portage, the source of the waters descending by Beaver Lake to the Saskatchawan. The distance to the Missinippi, or Churchill River, is only three hundred and eighty yards; and as its course crosses the height nearly at right angles to the direction of the Great River, it would be superfluous to compute the

elevation at this place. The portage is in latitude 55° 26′ 0″ N., and longitude 103° 34′ 50″ W. Its name, according to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, is derived from the Crees having left suspended a stretched frog's skin, in derision of the Northern Indian mode of dressing the beaver.

The part of the Missinippi, in which we embarked, we should have mistaken for a lake, had it not been for the rapidity of the current against which we made our way. At four P.M. we passed a long portage occasioned by a ledge of rocks, three hundred yards in length, over which the river falls seven or eight feet. After crossing another portage we encamped.

On the 18th we had rain, wind, and thunder, the whole day; but this weather was much preferable to the heat we had borne hitherto. We passed three portages, and, at six P.M., encamped on the north bank. Below the third portage is the mouth of the Rapid River, flowing from a large lake to the southward, on which a post was formerly maintained by the North-West Company. Next morning we found ourselves involved in a confused mass of islands, through the openings of which we could not discern the shore. The guide's knowledge of the river did not extend beyond the last portage, and our perplexity continued, till we observed some foam

floating on the water, and took the direction from which it came. The noise of a heavy fall, at the Mountain Portage, reached our ears, at the distance of four miles, and we arrived there at eight A.M. The portage was a difficult ascent over a rocky island, between which and the main shore were two cataracts and a third in sight above them, making another portage. We surprised a large brown bear which immediately retreated into the woods. To the northward of the second portage we again found the channels intricate, but the shores being sometimes visible, we ventured to proceed. The character of the country was new and more interesting than before. The mountainous and strong elevations receded from the banks, and the woods crept through their openings to the valleys behind; the adventurous pine alone ascending their bases, and braving storms unfelt below.

At noon we landed at the Otter Portage, where the river ran with great velocity for half a mile, among large stones. Having carried across the principal part of the cargo, the people attempted to track the canoes along the edge of the rapid. With the first they succeeded, but the other, in which were the foreman and steersman, was overset and swept away by the current. An account of this misfortune was speedily conveyed

to the upper end of the portage, and the men launched the remaining canoe into the rapid, though wholly unacquainted with the dangers of it. The descent was quickly accomplished, and they perceived the bottom of the lost canoe above water in a little bay, whither it had been whirled by the eddy. One man had reached the bank, but no traces could be found of the foreman, Louis Saint Jean. We saved the canoe, out of which two guns and a case of preserved meats had been thrown into the rapid*. So early a disaster deeply affected the spirits of the Canadians, and their natural vivacity gave way to melancholy forebodings, while they erected a wooden cross in the rocks near the spot where their companion perished.

The loss of this man's services, and the necessity of procuring a guide, determined us to wait for the arrival of the North-West Company's people from Fort Chipewyan, and we encamped accordingly. The canoe was much shattered, but as the gunwales were not broken, we easily repaired it. In the evening a N.W. canoe arrived, with two of the partners. They gave us an account of Mr. Franklin's proceedings and

* Mr. Hood himself was the first to leap into the canoe and incite the men to follow him, and shoot the rapid to save the lives of their companions.—Dr. Richardson's *Journal*.

referred us to the brigade following them for a guide.

During the 20th it rained heavily, and we passed the day in anxious suspense confined to our tents. A black bear came to the bank on the opposite side of the river, and on seeing us glided behind the trees.

Late on the 21st, Mr. Robertson, of the Hudson's Bay Company arrived, and furnished us with a guide, but desired that he might be exchanged when we met the northern canoes. We took advantage of the remainder of the day, to cross the next portage, which was three-fourths of a mile in length.

On the 22nd we crossed three small portages, and encamped at the fourth. At one of them we passed some of the Hudson's Bay Company's canoes, and our application to them was unsuccessful. We began to suspect that Isle à la Crosse was the nearest place at which we might hope for assistance. However, on the morning of the 23rd, as we were about to embark, we encountered the last brigades of canoes belonging to both the Companies, and obtained a guide and foreman from them. Thus completely equipped, we entered the Black Bear Island Lake, the navigation of which requires a very experienced pilot. Its length is twenty-two miles, and its

breadth varies from three to five, yet it is so choked with islands, that no channel is to be found through it, exceeding a mile in breadth. At sunset we landed, and encamped on an island, and at six A. M. on the 24th, left the lake and crossed three portages into another, which has, probably, several communications with the last, as that by which we passed is too narrow to convey the whole body of the Missinippi. At one of these portages called the Pin Portage is a rapid, about ten yards in length, with a descent of ten or twelve feet, and beset with rocks. Light canoes sometimes venture down this fatal gulf, to avoid the portage, unappalled by the warning crosses which overhang the brink, the mournful records of former failures.

The Hudson's Bay Company's people whom we passed on the 23rd, going to the rock house with their furs, were badly provided with food, of which we saw distressing proofs at every portage behind them. They had stripped the birch trees of their rind to procure the soft pulpy vessels in contact with the wood, which are sweet, but very insufficient to satisfy a craving appetite.

The lake to the westward of the Pin Portage, is called Sandfly Lake; it is seven miles long; and a wide channel connects it with the Serpent

Lake, the extent of which to the southward we could not discern. There is nothing remarkable in this chain of lakes, except their shapes, being rocky basins filled by the waters of the Missinippi, insulating the massy eminences, and meandering with almost imperceptible current between them. From the Serpent to the Sandy Lake, it is again confined in a narrow space by the approach of its winding banks, and on the 26th we were some hours employed in traversing a series of shallow rapids, where it was necessary to lighten the canoes. Having missed the path through the woods, we walked two miles in the water upon sharp stones, from which some of us were incessantly slipping into deep holes, and floundering in vain for footing at the bottom; a scene highly diverting, notwithstanding our fatigue. We were detained in Sandy Lake, till one P. M., by a strong gale, when the wind becoming moderate we crossed five miles to the mouth of the river, and at four P. M. left the main branch of it, and entered a little rivulet called the Grassy River, running through an extensive reedy swamp. It is the nest of innumerable ducks, which rear their young, among the long rushes, in security from beasts of prey. At sunset we encamped on the banks of the main branch.

At three A. M. June 28th, we embarked in a thick fog occasioned by a fall of the temperature of the air ten degrees below that of the water. Having crossed Knee Lake, which is nine miles in length, and a portage at its western extremity, we entered Primeau Lake, with a strong and favourable wind, by the aid of which we ran nineteen miles through it, and encamped at the river's mouth. It is shaped like the barb of an arrow, with the point towards the north, and its greatest breadth is about four miles.

During the night, a torrent of rain washed us from our beds, accompanied with the loudest thunder I ever heard. This weather continued during the 29th, and often compelled us to land, and turn the canoes up, to prevent them from filling. We passed one portage, and the confluence of a river, said to afford, by other rivers beyond a height of land, a shorter but more difficult route to the Athabasca Lake than that which is generally pursued.

On the 28th we crossed the last portage, and at ten A. M. entered the Isle à la Crosse Lake. Its long succession of woody points, both banks stretching towards the south, till their forms were lost in the haze of the horizon, was a grateful prospect to us, after our bewildered and interrupted voyage in the Missinippi. The gale

wafted us with unusual speed, and as the lake increased in breadth, the waves swelled to a dangerous height. A canoe running before the wind is very liable to burst asunder, when on the top of a wave, so that part of the bottom is out of the water; for there is nothing to support the weight of its heavy cargo but the bark, and the slight gunwales attached to it.

On making known our exigencies to the gentlemen in charge of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies' Forts, they made up an assortment of stores, amounting to five bales; for four of which we were indebted to Mr. Mac Leod of the North West Company, who shared with us the ammunition absolutely required for the support of his post; receiving in exchange an order for the same quantity upon the cargo which we expected to follow us from York Factory. We had heard from Mr. Stuart that Fort Chipewyan was too much impoverished to supply the wants of the Expedition, and we found Isle à la Crosse in the same condition; which, indeed, we might have foreseen, from the exhausted state of Cumberland House, but could not have provided against. We never had heard before our departure from York, that the posts in the interior only received annually the stores necessary for the consumption of a single year. It was fortunate for us that

Mr. Franklin had desired ten bags of pemmican to be sent from the Saskatchawan across the plains to Isle à la Crosse for our use. This resource was untouched, but we could not embark more than five pieces in our own canoes. However, Mr. Mac Leod agreed to send a canoe after us to the Methye Portage, with the pemmican, and we calculated that the diminution of our provision would there enable us to receive it.

The Beaver River enters this lake on the S.E. side, and another river which has not been named, on the S.W. Both these rivers are branches of the Missinippi, as it is the only outlet from the lake. The banks appeared to be rocky, and the beach in many places sandy, but its waters are yellow and muddy. It produces a variety of fish, among which its white-fish are esteemed the best in the country. The only birds visible at this season, are common to every part of the Missinippi; gulls, ducks, pigeons, goatsuckers, and the raven; and geese and swans pay a momentary visit in passing to the north and returning.

There was little in the forts differing from the establishments that we had before seen. The ground on which they are erected is sandy, and favourable to cultivation. Curiosity, however, was satisfied by the first experiment, and utility

alone has been unable to extend it. Isle à la Crosse is frequented by the Crees and the Chipewyans. It is not the dread of the Indians, but of one another, that has brought the rival Companies so close together at every trading post; each party seeking to prevent the other from engaging the affections of the natives, and monopolizing the trade. Whenever a settlement is made by the one, the other immediately follows, without considering the eligibility of the place; for it may injure its opponent, though it cannot benefit itself, and that advantage which is the first object of all other commercial bodies, becomes but the second with the fur traders.

On the evening of the 30th we embarked, and entered a wide channel to the northward of the forts, and extending towards the north-west. It gradually decreased in breadth till it became a river, which is the third fork of the Missinippi, and its current being almost insensible, we entered the Clear Lake at ten A.M. on the 1st of July. Of this lake, which is very large, no part is known except the south border, but its extent would lead us to conclude, that its evaporation must be supplied by another river to the northward, especially as the small channel that communicates with Buffalo Lake is motionless. The existence of such a river is asserted by the

Indians, and a shorter passage might be found by it across the height of land to Clear Water River, than the portage from the Methye Lake.

In Buffalo Lake, the wind was too strong for us to proceed, and we therefore encamped upon a gravel beach thrown up by the waves. We embarked at three A.M. July 2d, and at four P.M. entered the mouth of the Methye River. The lake is thirty-four miles in length, and fourteen in breadth. It is probably very deep, for we saw no islands on this wide expanse, except at the borders. On the south-west side were two forts, belonging to the Companies, and near them a solitary hill seven or eight hundred feet high. At eight P.M. we encamped in the Methye River, at the confluence of the river Pembina. A route has been explored by it to the Red Willow River, across the height of land, but the difficulties of it were so great, that the ordinary route is preferred.

On the 3d we passed through the Methye River, and encamped on the borders of the Methye Lake. The soil from Isle à la Crosse to this place is sandy, with some portion of clay, and the trees numerous; but the Methye River is stony, and so shallow, that to lighten the canoes, we made two portages of five and two miles. The paths were overflowed with cold

spring water, and barricadoed by fallen trees; we should have been contented to immerse ourselves wholly had the puddle been sufficiently deep, for the musquitoes devoured every part that was exposed to them.

On the 4th we crossed the Methye Lake, and landed at the portage on the north-west side, in one of the sources of the Missinippi. The lake is seventeen miles in length, with a large island in the middle. We proceeded to the north side of the portage with two men, carrying a tent and some instruments, leaving the canoes and cargoes to be transported by daily journeys of two or three miles. The distance is fourteen statute miles, and there are two small lakes about five miles from the north side. Several species of fish were found in them, though they have no known communication with any other body of water, being situated on the elevation of the height. The road was a gentle ascent, miry from the late rainy weather, and shaded by pines, poplars, birches, and cypresses, which terminated our view. On the north side we discovered through an opening in the trees, that we were on a hill eight or nine hundred feet high, and at the edge of a steep descent. We were prepared to expect an extensive prospect, but the magnificent scene before us was so superior to what the nature

of the country had promised, that it banished even our sense of suffering from the musquitoes, which hovered in clouds about our heads. Two parallel chains of hills extended towards the setting sun, their various projecting outlines exhibiting the several gradations of distance, and the opposite bases closing at the horizon. On the nearest eminence, the objects were clearly defined by their dark shadows; the yellow rays blended their softening hues with brilliant green on the next, and beyond it all distinction melted into gray and purple. In the long valley between, the smooth and colourless Clear Water River wound its spiral course, broken and shattered by encroaching woods. An exuberance of rich herbage covered the soil, and lofty trees climbed the precipice at our feet, hiding its brink with their summits. Impatient as we were, and blinded with pain, we paid a tribute of admiration, which this beautiful landscape is capable of exciting, unaided by the borrowed charms of a calm atmosphere, glowing with the vivid tints of evening.

We descended to the banks of the Clear Water River, and having encamped, the two men returned to assist their companions. We had sometimes before procured a little rest, by closing the tent, and burning wood, or flashing gunpowder

within, the smoke driving the musquitoes into the crannies of the ground. But this remedy was now ineffectual, though we employed it so perseveringly, as to hazard suffocation: they swarmed under our blankets, goring us with their envenomed trunks, and steeping our clothes in blood. We rose at daylight in a fever, and our misery was unmitigated during our whole stay.

The musquitoes of America resemble, in shape, those of Africa and Europe, but differ essentially in size and other particulars. There are two distinct species, the largest of which is brown, and the smallest black. Where they are bred cannot easily be determined, for they are numerous in every soil. They make their first appearance in May, and the cold destroys them in September; in July they are most voracious; and fortunately for the traders, the journeys from the trading posts to the factories are generally concluded at that period. The food of the musquito is blood, which it can extract by penetrating the hide of a buffalo; and if it is not disturbed, it gorges itself so as to swell its body into a transparent globe. The wound does not swell, like that of the African musquito, but it is infinitely more painful; and when multiplied an hundred fold, and continued for so many successive days, it becomes an evil of such magnitude, that cold,

famine, and every other concomitant of an inhospitable climate, must yield the pre-eminence to it. It chases the buffalo to the plains, irritating him to madness; and the rein-deer to the sea-shore, from which they do not return till the scourge has ceased.

On the 6th the thermometer was 106° in the sun, and on the 7th 110°. The musquitoes sought the shade in the heat of the day. It was some satisfaction to us to see the havoc made among them by a large and beautiful species of dragon-fly, called the musquito hawk, which wheeled through their retreats, swallowing its prey without a momentary diminution of its speed. But the temporary relief that we had hoped for was only an exchange of tormentors: our new assailant, the horse-fly, or bull-dog, ranged in the hottest glare of the sun, and carried off a portion of flesh at each attack. Another noxious insect, the smallest, but not the least formidable, was the sand-fly known in Canada by the name of the *brulot*. To such annoyance all travellers must submit, and it would be unworthy to complain of that grievance in the pursuit of knowledge, which is endured for the sake of profit. This detail of it has only been as an excuse for the scantiness of our observations on the

most interesting part of the country through which we passed.

The north side of the Methye Portage is in latitude 56° 41′ 40″ N. and longitude 109° 52′ 0″ W. It is, by our course, one hundred and twenty-four miles from Isle à la Crosse, and considered as a branch of the Missinippi, five hundred and ninety-two miles from the Frog Portage. The Clear Water River passing through the valley, described above, evidently rises not far to the eastward. The height, computed by the same mode as that of the Echiamamis, by allowing a foot for each mile of distance, and six feet on an average, for each fall and rapid, is two thousand four hundred and sixty-seven feet above the level of the sea, admitting it to be nine hundred feet above the Clear Water River. The country, in a line between it and the mouth of Mackenzie's River, is a continual descent, although to the eastward of that line, there may be several heights between it and the Arctic Sea. To the eastward, the lands descend to Hudson's Bay; and to the westward also, till the Athabasca River cuts through it, from whence it ascends to the Rocky Mountains. Daring was the spirit of enterprise that first led Commerce, with her cumbrous train, from the waters of Hudson's Bay to those of the

Arctic Sea, across an obstacle to navigation so stupendous as this; and persevering has been the industry which drew riches from a source so remote.

On the 8th two men arrived, and informed us, that they had brought us our ten bags of pemmican, from Isle à la Crosse, but that they were found to be rotten. Thus were we unexpectedly deprived of the most essential of our stores, for we knew Fort Chipewyan to be destitute of provisions, and that Mr. Franklin depended upon us for a supply, whereas, enough did not remain for our own use. On the 9th, the canoes and cargoes reached the north side of the portage. Our people had selected two bags of pemmican less mouldy than the rest, which they left on the beach. Its decay was caused by some defect in the mode of mixing it.

On the 10th, we embarked in the Clear Water River, and proceeded down the current. The hills, the banks, and bed of the river, were composed of fine yellow sand, with some limestone rocks. The surface soil was alluvial. At eight A.M. we passed a portage on which the limestone rocks were singularly scattered through the woods, bearing the appearance of houses and turrets overgrown with moss. The earth emitted a hollow sound, and the river was divided by rocks,

into narrow crooked channels, every object indicating that some convulsion had disturbed the general order of nature at this place. We had passed a portage above it, and after two long portages below it we encamped. Near the last was a small stream so strongly impregnated with sulphur, as to taint the air to a great distance around it. We saw two brown bears on the hills in the course of the day.

At daylight, on the 11th, we embarked. The hills continued on both sides to the mouth of the river, varying from eight hundred to one thousand feet in height. They declined to the banks in long green slopes, diversified by woody mounds and copses. The pines were not here in thick impenetrable masses, but perched aloft in single groups on the heights, or shrouded by the livelier hues of the poplar and willow.

We passed the mouth of the Red Willow River on the south bank, flowing through a deep ravine. It is the continuation of the route by the Pembina, before mentioned. At noon we entered the majestic Athabasca or Elk River. Its junction with the Clear Water River is called the Forks. Its banks were in accessible cliffs, apparently of clay and stones, about two hundred feet high, and its windings in the south were encircled by high mountains. Its breadth exceeded half a mile

and was swelled to a mile in many places by long muddy islands in the middle covered with trees. No more portages interrupted our course, but a swift current hurried us towards the quarter in which our anticipated discoveries were to commence. The passing cliffs returned a loud confusion of echoes to the sprightly canoe song, and the dashing paddles; and the eagles, watching with half-closed eyes on the pine-tops, started from their airy rest, and prepared their drowsy pinions for the flight.

About twenty miles from the Forks are some salt pits and plains, said to be very extensive. The height of the banks was reduced to twenty or thirty feet, and the hills ranged themselves at an increased distance from the banks in the same variety as those of the Clear Water River. At sunset we encamped on a small sandy island, but the next morning made a speedy retreat to the canoes, the water having nearly overflown our encampment. We passed two deserted settlements of the fur traders on opposite banks, at a place called Pierre au Calumet. Beyond it the hills disappeared, and the banks were no longer visible above the trees. The river carries away yearly large portions of soil, which increases its breadth, and diminishes its depth, rendering the water so muddy as to be scarcely drinkable.

Whole forests of timber are drifted down the stream, and choke up the channels between the islands at its mouth. We observed the traces of herds of buffaloes, where they had crossed the river, the trees being trodden down and strewed, as if by a whirlwind.

At four P.M. we left the main branch of the Athabasca, entering a small river, called the Embarras. It is narrow and muddy, with pines of an enormous size on its banks. Some of them are two hundred feet high, and three or four feet in diameter. At nine P.M. we landed and encamped; but finding ourselves in a nest of musquitoes, we continued our journey before daybreak; and at eight A.M., emerged into the Athabasca Lake. A strong wind agitated this sea of fresh water, which, however, we crossed without any accident, and landed on the north side of it, at Fort Chipewyan; where we had the satisfaction of finding our companions in good health, and of experiencing that sympathy in our anxiety on the state of affairs, which was only to be expected from those who were to share our future fortunes.

## CHAPTER VII.

Departure from Chipewyan—Difficulties of the various Navigations of the Rivers and Lakes, and of the Portages—Slave Lake and Fort Providence—Scarcity of Provisions, and discontent of the Canadian Voyagers—Difficulties with regard to the Indian Guides—Refusal to proceed—Visit of Observation to the Upper part of Copper-Mine River—Return to the Winter-Quarters of Fort Enterprise.

1820. July 18. EARLY this morning the stores were distributed to the three canoes. Our stock of provision unfortunately did not amount to more than sufficient for one day's consumption, exclusive of two barrels of flour, three cases of preserved meats, some chocolate, arrow-root, and portable soup, which we had brought from England, and intended to reserve for our journey to the coast the next season. Seventy pounds of moose meat and a little barley were all that Mr. Smith was enabled to give us. It was gratifying, however, to perceive that this scarcity of food did not depress the spirits of our Canadian companions, who cheerfully loaded their canoes, and embarked in high glee after they had received

the customary dram. At noon we bade farewell to our kind friend Mr. Smith. The crews commenced a lively paddling song on quitting the shore, which was continued until we had lost sight of the houses. We soon reached the western boundary of the lake, and at two entered the Stony River, one of the discharges of the Athabasca Lake into the Slave River, and having a favouring current passed swiftly along. This narrow stream is confined between low swampy banks, which support willows, dwarf birch, and alder. At five we passed its conflux with the Peace River. The Slave River, formed by the union of these streams, is about three quarters of a mile wide. We descended this magnificent river, with much rapidity, and after passing through several narrow channels, formed by an assemblage of islands, crossed a spot where the waters had a violent whirling motion, which, when the river is low, is said to subside into a dangerous rapid; on the present occasion no other inconvenience was felt than the inability of steering the canoes, which were whirled about in every direction by the eddies, until the current carried them beyond their influence. We encamped at seven, on the swampy bank of the river, but had scarcely pitched the tents before we were visited by a terrible thunder-storm; the rain fell in tor-

rents, and the violence of the wind caused the river to overflow its banks, so that we were completely flooded. Swarms of musquitoes succeeded the storm, and their tormenting stings, superadded to other inconveniences, induced us to embark, and, after taking a hasty supper to pursue our voyage down the stream during the night.

At six on the following morning we passed the Rein-Deer Islands, and at ten reached the entrance of the Dog River, where we halted to set the fishing nets. These were examined in the evening, but to our mortification we obtained only four small trout, and were compelled to issue part of our preserved meats for supper. The latitude of the mouth of Dog River, was observed 59° 52′ 16″ N.

The nets were taken up at daylight, but they furnished only a solitary pike. We lost no time in embarking, and crossed the crooked channel of the Dog Rapid, when two of the canoes came in such violent contact with each other, that the sternmost had its bow broken off. We were fortunately near the shore or the disabled canoe would have sunk. The injury being repaired in two hours, we again embarked, and having descended another rapid, arrived at the Cassette Portage of four hundred and sixty paces, over which the cargoes and canoes were carried in about twenty-six minutes. We next passed

through a narrow channel full of rapids, crossed the Portage d'Embarras of seventy yards; and the portage of the Little Rock, of three hundred yards, at which another accident happened to one of the canoes, by the bowman slipping and letting it fall upon a rock, and breaking it in two. Two hours were occupied in sewing the detached pieces together, and covering the seam with pitch; but this being done it was as effective as before. After leaving this place we soon came to the next portage, of two hundred and seventy-three paces; and shortly afterwards to the Mountain Portage, of one hundred and twenty: which is appropriately named, as the path leads over the summit of a high hill. This elevated situation commands a very grand and picturesque view, for some miles along the river, which at this part is about a mile wide.

We next crossed a portage of one hundred and twenty yards; and then the Pelican Portage, of eight hundred paces. Mr. Back took an accurate sketch of the interesting scenery which the river presents at this place. After descending six miles further we came to the last portage on the route to Slave Lake which we crossed, and encamped in its lower end. It is called "*The Portage of the Drowned,*" and it received that name from a melancholy accident which took place

many years ago. Two canoes arrived at the upper end of the portage, in one of which there was an experienced guide. This man judging from the height of the river, deemed it practicable to shoot the rapid, and determined upon trying it. He accordingly placed himself in the bow of his canoe, having previously agreed, that if the passage was found easy, he should, on reaching the bottom of the rapid, fire a musket, as a signal for the other canoe to follow. The rapid proved dangerous, and called forth all the skill of the guide, and the utmost exertion of his crew, and they narrowly escaped destruction. Just as they were landing, an unfortunate fellow seizing the loaded fowling-piece, fired at a duck which rose at the instant. The guide anticipating the consequences, ran with the utmost haste to the other end of the portage, but he was too late: the other canoe had pushed off, and he arrived only to witness the fate of his comrades. They got alarmed in the middle of the rapid, the canoe was upset, and every man perished.

The various rapids we passed this day, are produced by an assemblage of islands and rocky ledges, which obstruct the river, and divide it into many narrow channels. Two of these channels are rendered still more difficult by accumulations of drift timber; a circumstance which has

given a name to one of the portages. The rocks which compose the bed of the river, and the numerous islands, belong to the granite formation. The distance made to-day was thirteen miles.

*July* 21.—We embarked at four A.M. and pursued our course down the river. The rocks cease at the last portage; and below it the banks are composed of alluvial soil, which is held together by the roots of trees and shrubs that crown their summits. The river is about a mile wide, and the current is greatly diminished. At eight we landed at the mouth of the Salt River, and pitched our tents, intending to remain there that and the next day for the purpose of fishing. After breakfast, which made another inroad on our preserved meats, we proceeded up the river in a light canoe, to visit the salt springs, leaving a party behind to attend the nets. This river is about one hundred yards wide at its mouth. Its waters did not become brackish until we had ascended it seven or eight miles; but when we had passed several rivulets of fresh water which flowed in, the main stream became very salt, at the same time contracting its width to fifteen or twenty yards. At a distance of twenty-two miles, including the windings of the river, the plains commence. Having pitched the tent at this spot, we set out to visit the principal springs, and

had walked about three miles when the musquitoes compelled us to give up our project. We did not see the termination of the plains toward the east, but on the north and west they are bounded by an even ridge, about six or seven hundred feet in height. Several salt springs issue from the foot of this ridge, and spread their waters over the plain, which consists of tenacious clay. During the summer much evaporation takes place, and large heaps of salt are left behind crystallized in the form of cubes. Some beds of grayish compact gypsum were exposed on the sides of the hills.

The next morning after filling some casks with salt for our use during winter, we embarked to return, and had descended the river a few miles, when turning round a point, we perceived a buffalo plunge into the river before us. Eager to secure so valuable a prize, we instantly opened a fire upon him from four muskets, and in a few minutes he fell, but not before he had received fourteen balls. The carcass was towed to the bank, and the canoe speedily laden with meat. After this piece of good fortune, we descended the stream merrily, our voyagers chanting their liveliest songs. On arrival at the mouth of the river, we found that our nets had not produced more than enough to supply a scanty meal to the

men whom we had left behind, but this was now of little importance, as the acquisition of meat we had made would enable us to proceed without more delay to Slave Lake. The *poisson inconnu* mentioned by Mackenzie, is found here. It is a species of the Genus Salmo, and is said by the Indians to ascend from the Arctic Sea, but being unable to pass the cascade of the Slave River, is not found higher than this place. In the evening a violent thunder-storm came on with heavy rain, thermometer 70°.

At a very early hour on the following morning we embarked, and continued to paddle against a very strong wind and high waves, under the shelter of the bank of the rivers, until two P.M., when having arrived at a more exposed part of the stream, the canoes took in so much water that we were obliged to disembark on a small island. The river here is from one mile and a quarter to one mile and three quarters wide. Its banks are of moderate height, sandy, and well wooded.

*July* 24.—We made more progress notwithstanding the continuance of the wind. The course of the river is very winding, making in one place a circuit of seven or eight miles round a peninsula, which is joined to the west bank by a narrow isthmus. Near the foot of this elbow, a

long island occupies the centre of the river, which it divides into two channels. The longitude was obtained near to it 113° 25′ 36″, and variation 27° 25′ 14″ N., and the latitude 60° 54′ 52″ N., about four miles farther down. We passed the mouth of a broad channel leading to the north-east, termed La Grande Rivière de Jean, one of the two large branches by which the river pours its waters into the Great Slave Lake; the flooded *delta* at the mouth of the river is intersected by several smaller channels, through one of which, called the Channel of the Scaffold, we pursued our voyage on the following morning, and by eight A.M. reached the establishment of the North-West Company on Moose-Deer Island. We found letters from Mr. Wentzel, dated Fort Providence, a station on the north side of the lake, which communicated to us, that there was an Indian guide waiting for us at that post; but, that the chief and the hunters, who were to accompany the party, had gone to a short distance to hunt, having become impatient at our delay.

Soon after landing, I visited the Hudson's Bay Post on the same island, and engaged Pierre St. Germain, an interpreter for the Copper Indians. We regretted to find the posts of both the Companies extremely bare of provision; but as the gentlemen in charge had despatched men on the

preceding evening, to a band of Indians, in search of meat, and they promised to furnish us with whatever should be brought, it was deemed advisable to wait for their return, as the smallest supply was now of importance to us. Advantage was taken of the delay to repair effectually the canoe, which had been broken in the Dog Rapid. On the next evening the men arrived with the meat, and enabled Mr. M'Cleod, of the North-West Company, to furnish us with four hundred pounds of dried provisions. Mr. M'Vicar, of the Hudson's Bay Company, also supplied one hundred and fifty pounds. This quantity we considered would be sufficient, until we could join the hunters. We also obtained three fishing-nets, a gun, and a pair of pistols, which were all the stores these posts could furnish, although the gentlemen in charge were much disposed to assist us.

Moose-Deer Island is about a mile in diameter, and rises towards the centre about three hundred feet above the lake. Its soil is in general sandy, in some parts swampy. The varieties of the northern berries grow abundantly on it. The North-West Company's Fort is in latitude 61° 11′ 8″ N.; longitude 113° 51′ 37″ W., being two hundred and sixty statute miles distant from Fort Chipewyan, by the river course. The

variation of the compass is 25° 40′ 47″ E. The houses of the two Companies are small, and have a bleak northern aspect. There are vast accumulations of drift wood on the shores of the lake, brought down by the river, which afford plenty of fuel. The inhabitants live principally on the fish, which the lake at certain seasons furnishes in great abundance; of these, the white fish, trout, and *poisson inconnu* are considered the best. They also procure moose, buffalo, and rein-deer meat occasionally from their hunters; but these animals are generally found at the distance of several days' walk from the forts. The Indians who trade here are Chipewyans. Beavers, martens, foxes, and musk-rats, are caught in numbers in the vicinity of this great body of water. The musquitoes here were still a serious annoyance to us, but less numerous than before. They were in some degree replaced by a small sandfly, whose bite is succeeded by a copious flow of blood, and considerable swelling, but is attended with incomparably less irritation, than the puncture of the musquito.

On the 27th of July we embarked at four A.M., and proceeded along the south shore of the lake, through a narrow channel, formed by some islands, beyond the confluence of the principal branch of the Slave River; and as far as Stony

Island, where we breakfasted. This island is merely a rock of gneiss, that rises forty or fifty feet above the lake, and is precipitous on the north side. As the day was fine, and the lake smooth, we ventured upon paddling across to the Rein-Deer Islands, which were distant about thirteen miles in a northern direction, instead of pursuing the usual track by keeping further along the south shore which inclines to the eastward from this point. These islands are numerous, and consist of granite, rising from one hundred to two hundred feet above the water. They are for the most part naked; but towards the centres of the larger ones, there is a little soil, and a few groves of pines. At seven in the evening we landed upon one of them, and encamped. On the following morning we ran before a strong breeze, and a heavy swell, for some hours, but at length were obliged to seek shelter on a large island adjoining to Isle à la Cache of Mackenzie, where the following observations were obtained: latitude 61° 50′ 18″ N., longitude 113° 21′ 40″ W., and variation 31° 2′ 06″ E.

The wind and swell having subsided in the afternoon, we re-embarked and steered towards the western point of the Big-Island of Mackenzie, and when four miles distant from it, had forty-two fathoms soundings. Passing between this

island and a promontory of the main shore, termed Big Cape, we entered into a deep bay, which receives the waters from several rivers that come from the northward; and we immediately perceived a decrease in the temperature of the waters from 59° to 48°. We coasted along the eastern side of the bay, its western shore being always visible, but the canoes were exposed to the hazard of being broken by the numerous sunken rocks, which were scattered in our track. We encamped for the night on a rocky island, and by eight A.M. on the following morning, arrived at Fort Providence, which is situated twenty-one miles from the entrance of the bay. The post is exclusively occupied by the North-West Company, the Hudson's Bay Company having no settlement to the northward of Great Slave Lake. We found Mr. Wentzel and our interpreter Jean Baptiste Adam here, with one of the Indian guides: but the chief of the tribe and his hunters were encamped with their families, some miles from the fort, in a good situation for fishing. Our arrival was announced to him by a fire on the top of a hill, and before night a messenger came to communicate his intention of seeing us next morning. The customary present, of tobacco and some other articles, was immediately sent to him.

Mr. Wentzel prepared me for the first conference with the Indians by mentioning all the information they had already given to him. The duties allotted to this gentleman were, the management of the Indians, the superintendence of the Canadian voyagers, the obtaining, and the general distribution, of the provision, and the issue of the other stores. These services he was well qualified to perform, having been accustomed to execute similar duties, during a residence of upwards of twenty years in this country. We also deemed Mr. Wentzel to be a great acquisition to our party, as a check on the interpreters, he being one of the few traders who speak the Chipewyan language.

As we were informed that external appearances made lasting impressions on the Indians, we prepared for the interview by decorating ourselves in uniform, and suspending a medal round each of our necks. Our tents had been previously pitched and over one them a silken union flag was hoisted. Soon after noon, on July 30th, several Indian canoes were seen advancing in a regular line, and on their approach, the chief was discovered in the headmost, which was paddled by two men. On landing at the fort, the chief assumed a very grave aspect, and walked up to Mr. Wentzel with a measured and dignified step,

looking neither to the right nor to the left, at the persons who had assembled on the beach to witness his debarkation, but preserving the same immoveability of countenance until he reached the hall, and was introduced to the officers. When he had smoked his pipe, drank a small portion of spirits and water himself, and issued a glass to each of his companions, who had seated themselves on the floor, he commenced his harangue, by mentioning the circumstances that led to his agreeing to accompany the Expedition, an engagement which he was quite prepared to fulfil. He was rejoiced, he said, to see such great chiefs on his lands; his tribe were poor, but they loved white men who had been their benefactors; and he hoped that our visit would be productive of much good to them. The report which preceded our arrival, he said, had caused much grief to him. It was at first rumoured that a great medicine chief accompanied us, who was able to restore the dead to life; at this he rejoiced; the prospect of again seeing his departed relatives had enlivened his spirits, but his first communication with Mr. Wentzel had removed these vain hopes, and he felt as if his friends had a second time been torn from him. He now wished to be informed exactly of the nature of our expedition.

In reply to this speech, which I understood had

been prepared for many days, I endeavoured to explain the objects of our mission in a manner best calculated to ensure his exertions in our service. With this view, I told him that we were sent out by the greatest chief in the world, who was the sovereign also of the trading companies in the country; that he was the friend of peace, and had the interest of every nation at heart. Having learned that his children in the north were much in want of articles of merchandize, in consequence of the extreme length and difficulty of the present route; he had sent us to search for a passage by the sea, which if found, would enable large vessels to transport great quantities of goods more easily to their lands. That we had not come for the purpose of traffic, but solely to make discoveries for their benefit, as well as that of every other people. That we had been directed to inquire into the nature of all the productions of the countries we might pass through, and particularly respecting their inhabitants. That we desired the assistance of the Indians in guiding us, and providing us with food; finally, that we were most positively enjoined by the great chief to recommend that hostilities should cease throughout this country; and especially between the Indians and the Esquimaux, whom he considered his children, in common with other

natives; and by way of enforcing the latter point more strongly, I assured him that a forfeiture of all the advantages which might be anticipated from the Expedition would be a certain consequence if any quarrel arose between his party and the Esquimaux. I also communicated to him that owing to the distance we had travelled, we had now few more stores than was necessary for the use of our own party, a part or these, however, should be forthwith presented to him; on his return he and his party should be remunerated with cloth, ammunition, tobacco, and some useful iron materials, besides having their debts to the North-West Company discharged.

The chief, whose name is Akaitcho or Big-foot, replied by a renewal of his assurances, that he and his party would attend us to the end of our journey, and that they would do their utmost to provide us with the means of subsistence. He admitted that his tribe had made war upon the Esquimaux, but said they were now desirous of peace, and unanimous in their opinion as to the necessity of all who accompanied us abstaining from every act of enmity against that nation. He added, however, that the Esquimaux were very treacherous, and therefore recommended that we should advance towards them with caution.

The communications which the chief and the

guides then gave respecting the route to the Copper-Mine River, and its course to the sea, coincided in every material point with the statements which were made by Boileau and Blackmeat at Chipewyan, but they differed in their descriptions of the coast. The information, however, collected from both sources was very vague and unsatisfactory. None of his tribe had been more than three days' march along the sea-coast to the eastward of the river's mouth.

As the water was unusually high this season, the Indian guides recommended our going by a shorter route to the Copper-Mine River than that they had first proposed to Mr. Wentzel, and they assigned as a reason for the change, that the rein-deer would be sooner found upon this track. They then drew a chart of the proposed route on the floor with charcoal, exhibiting a chain of twenty-five small lakes extending towards the north, about one half of them connected by a river which flows into Slave Lake, near Fort Providence. One of the guides, named Keskarrah, drew the Copper-Mine River, running through the Upper Lake, in a westerly direction towards the Great Bear Lake, and then northerly to the sea. The other guide drew the river in a straight line to the sea from the above-mentioned place, but, after some dispute, admitted the correctness

of the first delineation. The latter was elder brother to Akaitcho, and he said that he had accompanied Mr. Hearne on his journey, and though very young at the time, still remembered many of the circumstances, and particularly the massacre committed by the Indians on the Esquimaux.

They pointed out another lake to the southward of the river, about three days' journey distant from it, on which the chief proposed the next winter's establishment should be formed, as the rein-deer would pass there in the autumn and spring. Its waters contained fish, and there was a sufficiency of wood for building as well as for the winter's consumption. These were important considerations, and determined me in pursuing the route they now proposed. They could not inform us what time we should take in reaching the lake, until they saw our manner of travelling in the large canoes, but they supposed we might be about twenty days, in which case I entertained the hope that if we could then procure provision we should have time to descend the Copper-Mine River for a considerable distance if not to the sea itself, and return to the lake before the winter set in.

It may here be proper to mention that it had been my original plan to descend the Mackenzie's

River, and to cross the Great Bear Lake from the eastern side of which, Boileau informed me, there is a communication with the Copper-Mine River by four small lakes and portages; but, under our present circumstances, this course could not be followed, because it would remove us too far from the establishments at the Great Slave Lake, to receive the supplies of ammunition and some other stores in the winter which were absolutely necessary for the prosecution of our journey, or to get the Esquimaux interpreter, whom we expected. If I had not deemed these circumstances paramount I should have preferred the route by Bear Lake.

Akaitcho and the guides having communicated all the information they possessed on the different points to which our questions had been directed, I placed my medal round the neck of the chief, and the officers presented theirs to an elder brother of his and the two guides, communicating to them that these marks of distinction were given as tokens of our friendship and as pledges of the sincerity of our professions. Being conferred in the presence of all the hunters their acquisition was highly gratifying to them, but they studiously avoided any great expression of joy, because such an exposure would have been unbecoming the dignity which the senior Indians assume

during a conference. They assured us, however, of their being duly sensible of these tokens of our regard, and that they should be preserved during their lives with the utmost care. The chief evinced much penetration and intelligence during the whole of this conversation, which gave us a favourable opinion of his intellectual powers. He made many inquiries respecting the Discovery ships, under the command of Captain Parry, which had been mentioned to him, and asked why a passage had not been discovered long ago, if one existed. It may be stated that we gave a faithful explanation to all his inquiries, which policy would have prompted us to do if a love of truth had not; for whenever these northern nations detect a falsehood in the dealings of the traders, they make it an unceasing subject of reproach, and their confidence is irrecoverably lost.

We presented to the chief, the two guides, and the seven hunters, who had engaged to accompany us, some cloth, blankets, tobacco, knives, daggers, besides other useful iron materials, and a gun to each; also a keg of very weak spirits and water, which they kept until the evening, as they had to try their guns before dark, and make the necessary preparations for commencing the journey on the morrow. They, however, did

not leave us so soon, as the chief was desirous of being present, with his party, at the dance, which was given in the evening to our Canadian voyagers. They were highly entertained by the vivacity and agility displayed by our companions in their singing and dancing: and especially by their imitating the gestures of a Canadian, who placed himself in the most ludicrous postures; and, whenever this was done, the gravity of the chief gave way to violent bursts of laughter. In return for the gratification Akaitcho had enjoyed, he desired his young men to exhibit the Dog-Rib Indian dance; and immediately they ranged themselves in a circle, and, keeping their legs widely separated, began to jump simultaneously sideways; their bodies were bent, their hands placed on their hips, and they uttered forcibly the interjection *tsa* at each jump. Devoid as were their attitudes of grace, and their music of harmony, we were much amused by the novelty of the exhibition.

In the midst of this scene an untoward accident occurred, which for a time interrupted our amusements. The tent in which Dr. Richardson and I lodged, having caught fire from some embers that had been placed in it to expel the musquitoes, was entirely burnt. Hepburn, who was sleeping

within it, close to some powder, most providentially awoke in time to throw it clear of the flame, and rescue the baggage, before any material injury had been received. We dreaded the consequences of this disaster upon the fickle minds of the Indians, and wished it not to be communicated to them. The chief, however, was soon informed of it by one of his people, and expressed his desire that no future misfortune should be concealed from him. We found he was most concerned to hear that the flag had been burnt, but we removed his anxiety on that point, by the assurance that it could easily be repaired. We were advised by Mr. Wentzel to recommence the dancing after this event, lest the Indians should imagine, by our putting a stop to it, that we considered the circumstance as an unfavourable commencement of our undertaking. We were, however deeply impressed with a grateful sense of the Divine Providence, in averting the threatened destruction of our stores, which would have been fatal to every prospect of proceeding forward this season.

*August* 1.—This morning the Indians set out, intending to wait for us at the mouth of the Yellow-Knife River. We remained behind to pack our stores, in bales of eighty pounds each, an operation which could not be done in the pre-

sence of these Indians, as they are in the habit of begging for every thing they see. Our stores consisted of two barrels of gunpowder, one hundred and forty pounds of ball and small shot, four fowling-pieces, a few old trading guns, eight pistols, twenty-four Indian daggers, some packages of knives, chisels, axes, nails, and fastenings for a boat; a few yards of cloth, some blankets, needles, looking-glasses, and beads; together with nine fishing-nets, having meshes of different sizes. Our provision was two casks of flour, two hundred dried rein-deer tongues, some dried moose-meat, portable soup, and arrow-root, sufficient in the whole for ten days' consumption, besides two cases of chocolate, and two canisters of tea. We engaged another Canadian voyager at this place, and the Expedition then consisted of twenty-eight persons, including the officers, and the wives of three of our voyagers, who were brought for the purpose of making shoes and clothes for the men at the winter establishment; there were also three children, belonging to two of these women *.

* The following is the list of the officers and men who composed the Expedition on its departure from Fort Providence:

John Franklin, Lieutenant of the Royal Navy and Commander.
John Richardson, M.D., Surgeon of the Royal Navy.
Mr. George Back, of the Royal Navy, Admiralty Midshipman.
Mr. Robert Hood, of the Royal Navy, Admiralty Midshipman.

Mr.

Our observations place Fort Providence in latitude 62° 17′ 19″ N., longitude 114° 9′ 28″ W.; the variation of the compass is 33° 35′ 55″ E., and dip of the needle 86° 38′ 02″. It is distant from Moose-Deer Island sixty-six geographic miles. This is the last establishment of the traders in this direction, but the North-West Company have two to the northward of it, on the Mackenzie River. It has been erected for the convenience of the Copper and Dog-Rib Indians, who generally bring such a quantity of rein-deer meat that the residents are enabled, out of their superabundance, to send annually some provision to the fort at Moose-Deer Island. They also occasionally procure moose and buffalo meat, but these animals are not numerous on this

Mr. Frederick Wentzel, Clerk to the North-West Company.
John Hepburn, English seaman.

CANADIAN VOYAGERS.

Joseph Peltier,
Matthew Pelonquin, dit Crèdit,
Solomon Belanger,
Joseph Benoit,
Joseph Gagné,
Pierre Dumas,
Joseph Forcier,
Ignace Perrault,
Francois Samandré.
Gabriel Beauparlant,
Vincenza Fontano,
Registe Vaillant,
Jean Baptiste Parent,
Jean Baptiste Belanger,
Jean Baptiste Belleau,
Emanuel Cournoyée,
Michel Teroahauté, an Iroquois.

INTERPRETERS.

Pierre St. Germain,
Jean Baptiste Adam,
Chipewyan Bois Brulés.

side of the lake. Few furs are collected. *Les poissons inconnus*, trout, pike, carp, and white-fish are very plentiful, and on these the residents principally subsist. Their great supply of fish is procured in the latter part of September and the beginning of October, but there are a few taken daily in the nets during the winter. The surrounding country consists almost entirely of coarse grained granite, frequently enclosing large masses of reddish felspar. These rocks form hills which attain an elevation of three hundred or four hundred feet, about a mile behind the house; their surface is generally naked, but in the valleys between them grow a few spruce, aspen, and birch trees, together with a variety of shrubs and berry-bearing plants.

On the afternoon of the 2d of August we commenced our journey, having, in addition to our three canoes, a smaller one to convey the women; we were all in high spirits, being heartily glad that the time had at length arrived when our course was to be directed towards the Copper-Mine River, and through a line of country which had not been previously visited by any European. We proceeded to the northward, along the eastern side of a deep bay of the lake, passing through various channels, formed by an assemblage of rocky islands; and, at sunset, encamped on a

projecting point of the north main shore, eight miles from Fort Providence. To the westward of this arm, or bay, of the lake, there is another deep bay, that receives the waters of a river, which communicates with Great Marten Lake, where the North-West Company had once a post established. The eastern shores of the Great Slave Lake are very imperfectly known: none of the traders have visited them, and the Indians give such loose and unsatisfactory accounts, that no estimation can be formed of its extent in that direction. These men say there is a communication from its eastern extremity by a chain of lakes, with a shallow river, which discharges its waters into the sea. This stream they call the Thlouee-tessy, and report it to be navigable for Indian canoes only. The forms of the south and western shores are better known from the survey of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and in consequence of the canoes having to pass and repass along these borders annually, between Moose-Deer Island and Mackenzie's River. Our observations made the breadth of the lake, between Stony Island, and the north main shore, sixty miles less than it is laid down in Arrowsmith's map; and there is also a considerable difference in the longitude of the eastern side of the bay, which we entered.

. This lake, owing to its great depth, is seldom completely frozen over before the last week in November, and the ice, which is generally seven feet thick, breaks up about the middle of June, three weeks later than that of the Slave River. The only known outlet to this vast body of water, which receives so many streams on its north and south shores, is the Mackenzie's River.

*August* 3.—We embarked at three A.M. and proceeded to the entrance of the Yellow-Knife River of the traders, which is called by the natives Beg-ho-lo-dessy; or, River of the Toothless Fish. We found Akaitcho, and the hunters with their families, encamped here. There were also several other Indians of his tribe, who intended to accompany us some distance into the interior. This party was quickly in motion after our arrival, and we were soon surrounded by a fleet of seventeen Indian canoes. In company with them we paddled up the river, which is one hundred and fifty yards wide, and, in an hour, came to a cascade of five feet, where we were compelled to make a portage of one hundred and fifty-eight yards. We next crossed a dilatation of the river, about six miles in length, upon which the name of Lake Prosperous was bestowed. Its shores, though scantily supplied with wood, are very picturesque.

Akaitcho caused himself to be paddled by his slave, a young man, of the Dog-Rib nation, whom he had taken by force from his friends; when he thought himself, however, out of reach of our observation, he laid aside a good deal of his state, and assisted in the labour; and after a few days further acquaintance with us, he did not hesitate to paddle in our presence, or even carry his canoe on the portages. Several of the canoes were managed by women, who proved to be noisy companions, for they quarrelled frequently, and the weakest was generally profuse in her lamentations, which were not at all diminished, when the husband attempted to settle the difference by a few blows with his paddle.

An observation, near the centre of the lake, gave 114° 13′ 39″ W., and 33° 8′ 06″ E., variation.

Leaving the lake, we ascended a very strong rapid, and arrived at a range of three steep cascades, situated in the bend of the river. Here we made a portage of one thousand three hundred yards over a rocky hill, which received the name of the Bowstring Portage, from its shape. We found that the Indians had greatly the advantage of us in this operation; the men carried their small canoes, the women and children the clothes and

provisions, and at the end of the portage they were ready to embark; whilst it was necessary for our people to return four times, before they could transport the weighty cargo with which we were burdened. After passing through another expansion of the river, and over the Steep Portage of one hundred and fifteen yards, we encamped on a small rocky isle, just large enough to hold our party, and the Indians took possession of an adjoining rock. We were now thirty miles from Fort Providence.

As soon as the tents were pitched, the officers and men were divided into watches for the night; a precaution intended to be taken throughout the journey, not merely to prevent our being surprised by strangers, but also to shew our companions that we were constantly on our guard. The chief who suffered nothing to escape his observation, remarked, "that he should sleep without anxiety among the Esquimaux, for he perceived no enemy could surprise us."

After supper we retired to rest, but our sleep was soon interrupted by the Indians joining in loud lamentations over a sick child, whom they supposed to be dying. Dr. Richardson, however, immediately went to the boy, and administered some medicine which relieved his pain, and put a

stop to their mourning. The temperatures, this day, were at four A.M., 54°, three P.M. 72°, at seven P.M. 65°.

On the 4th we crossed a small lake, and passed in succession over the Blue Berry Cascade, and Double Fall Portages, where the river falls over ridges of rocks that completely obstruct the passage for canoes. We came to three strong rapids beyond these barriers, which were surmounted by the aid of the poles and lines, and then to a bend of the river in which the cascades were so frequent, that to avoid them we carried the canoes into a chain of small lakes. We entered them by a portage of nine hundred and fifty paces, and during the afternoon traversed three other grassy lakes and encamped on the banks of the river, at the end of the Yellow-Knife Portage, of three hundred and fifty paces. This day's work was very laborious to our men. Akaitcho, however, had directed his party to assist them in carrying their burdens on the portages, which they did cheerfully. This morning Mr. Back caught several fish with a fly, a method of fishing entirely new to the Indians; and they were not more delighted than astonished at his skill and success. The extremes of temperature to day were 54° and 65°.

On August 5th we continued the ascent of the

river which varied much in breadth as did the current in rapidity. It flows between high rocky banks on which there is sufficient soil to support pines, birch, and poplars. Five portages were crossed, then the Rocky Lake, and we finished our labours at the end of the sixth portage. The issue of dried meat for breakfast this morning had exhausted all our stock; and no other provision remained but the portable soups, and a few pounds of preserved meat. At the recommendation of Akaitcho, the hunters were furnished with ammunition, and desired to go forward as speedily as possible, to the part where the rein-deer were expected to be found; and to return to us with any provision they could procure. He also assured us that in our advance towards them we should come to lakes abounding in fish. Many of the Indians being likewise in distress for food, decided on separating from us, and going on at a quicker pace than we could travel.

Akaitcho himself was always furnished with a portion at our meals, as a token of regard which the traders have taught the chiefs to expect, and which we willingly paid.

The next morning we crossed a small lake and a portage, before we entered the river; shortly afterwards, the canoes and cargoes were carried a mile along its banks, to avoid three

very strong rapids, and over another portage into a narrow lake; we encamped on an island in the middle of it, to set the nets; but they only yielded a few fish, and we had a very scanty supper, as it was necessary to deal out our provision sparingly. The longitude 114° 27′ 03″ W. and variation 33° 04″ E., were observed.

We had the mortification of finding the nets entirely empty next morning, an untoward circumstance that discouraged our voyagers very much; and they complained of being unable to support the fatigue to which they were daily exposed, on their present scanty fare. We had seen with regret that the portages were more frequent as we advanced to the northward, and feared that their strength would fail, if provision were not soon obtained. We embarked at six, proceeded to the head of the lake, and crossed a portage of two thousand five hundred paces, leading over ridges of sand-hills, which nourished pines of a larger size than we had lately seen. This conducted us to Mossy Lake, whence we regained the river, after traversing another portage. The Birch and Poplar Portages next followed, and beyond these we came to a part where the river takes a great circuit, and its course is interrupted by several heavy falls. The guide, therefore, advised us to quit it, and proceed through a

chain of nine lakes extending to the north-east, which we did, and encamped on Icy Portage, where the nets were set. The bottom of the valley, through which the track across this portage led, was covered with ice four or five feet thick, the remains of a large iceberg, which is annually formed there, by the snow drifting into the valley, and becoming consolidated into ice by the overflowing of some springs that are warm enough to resist the winter's cold. The latitude is 63° 22′ 15″ N., longitude 114° 15′ 30″ W.

We were alarmed in the night by our fire communicating to the dry moss, which, spreading by the force of a strong wind, encircled the encampment and threatened destruction to our canoes and baggage. The watch immediately aroused all the men, who quickly removed whatever could be injured to a distant part, and afterwards succeeded in extinguishing the flame.

*August* 8.—During this day we crossed five portages, passing over a very bad road. The men were quite exhausted with fatigue by five P.M., when we were obliged to encamp on the borders of the fifth lake, in which the fishing nets were set. We began this evening to issue some portable soup and arrow-root, which our companions relished very much; but this food is too unsubstantial to support their vigour under their

daily exhausting labour, and we could not furnish them with a sufficient quantity even of this to satisfy their desires. We commenced our labours on the next day in a very wet uncomfortable state, as it had rained through the night until four A.M. The fifth grassy lake was crossed, and four others, with their intervening portages, and we returned to the river by a portage of one thousand four hundred and fifteen paces. The width of the stream here is about one hundred yards, its banks are moderately high and scantily covered with wood. We afterwards twice carried the cargoes along its banks to avoid a very stony rapid, and then crossed the first Carp Portage in longitude 114° 2′ 01″ W., variation of the compass 32° 30′ 40″ E., and encamped on the borders of Lower Carp Lake.

The chief having told us that this was a good lake for fishing, we determined on halting for a day or two to recruit our men, of whom three were lame, and several others had swelled legs. The chief himself went forward to look after the hunters, and promised to make a fire as a signal if they had killed any rein-deer. All the Indians had left us in the course of yesterday and to-day to seek these animals, except the guide Keskarrah.

*August* 10.—The nets furnishing only four

carp, we embarked for the purpose of searching for a better spot, and encamped again on the shores of the same lake. The spirits of the men were much revived by seeing some recent traces of rein-deer at this place, which circumstance caused them to cherish the hope of soon getting a supply of meat from the hunters. They were also gratified by finding abundance of blue berries near the encampment, which made an agreeable and substantial addition to their otherwise scanty fare. We were teased by sand-flies this evening, although the thermometer did not rise above 45°. The country through which we had travelled for some days consists principally of granite, intermixed in some spots with mica-slate, often passing into clay-slate. But the borders of Lower Carp Lake, where the gneiss formation prevails, are composed of hills, having less altitude, fewer precipices, and more rounded summits. The valleys are less fertile, containing a gravelly soil and fewer trees; so that the country has throughout a more barren aspect.

*August* 11.—Having caught sufficient trout, white-fish, and carp, yesterday and this morning, to afford the party two hearty meals, and the men having recovered their fatigue, we proceeded on our journey, crossed the Upper Carp Portage, and embarked on the lake of that name,

where we had the gratification of paddling for ten miles. We put up at its termination to fish, by the advice of our guide, and the following observations were then taken: longitude 113° 46′ 35″ W., variation of the compass 36° 45′ 30″ E., dip 87° 11′ 48″. At this place we first perceived the north end of our dipping-needle to pass the perpendicular line when the instrument was faced to the west.

We had scarcely quitted the encampment next day before an Indian met us, with the agreeable communication, that the hunters had made several fires, which were certain indications of their having killed rein-deer. This intelligence inspired our companions with fresh energy, and they quickly traversed the next portage, and paddled through the Rein-Deer Lake; at the north side of it we found the canoes of our hunters, and learned from our guide, that the Indians usually leave their canoes here, as the water communication on their hunting grounds is bad. The Yellow-Knife River had now dwindled into an insignificant rivulet, and we could not trace it beyond the next lake, except as a mere brook. The latitude of its source 64° 1′ 30″ N., longitude 113° 36′ W., and its length is one hundred and fifty-six statute miles. Though this river is of sufficient breadth and depth for navigating in ca-

noes, yet I conceive its course is too much interrupted by cascades and rapids for its ever being used as a channel for the conveyance of merchandise. Whilst the crews were employed in making a portage over the foot of Prospect Hill, we ascended to the top of it, and as it is the highest ground in the neighbourhood, its summit, which is about five hundred feet above the water, commands an extensive view.

Akaitcho, who was here with his family, pointed out to us the smoke of the distant fires which the hunters had made. The prospect is agreeably diversified by an intermixture of hill and valley, and the appearance of twelve lakes in different directions. On the borders of these lakes a few thin pine groves occur, but the country in general is destitute of almost every vegetable, except a few berry-bearing shrubs and lichens, and has a very barren aspect. The hills are composed of gneiss, but their acclivities are covered with a coarse gravelly soil. There are many large loose stones both on their sides and summits composed of the same materials as the solid rock.

We crossed another lake in the evening, encamped, and set the nets. The chief made a large fire to announce our situation to the hunters.

*August* 13.—We caught twenty fish this morn-

ing, but they were small, and furnished but a scanty breakfast for the party. Whilst this meal was preparing, our Canadian voyagers, who had been for some days past murmuring at their meagre diet, and striving to get the whole of our little provision to consume at once, broke out into open discontent, and several of them threatened they would not proceed forward unless more food was given to them. This conduct was the more unpardonable, as they saw we were rapidly approaching the fires of the hunters, and that provision might soon be expected. I, therefore, felt the duty incumbent on me to address them in the strongest manner on the danger of insubordination, and to assure them of my determination to inflict the heaviest punishment on any that should persist in their refusal to go on, or in any other way attempt to retard the Expedition. I considered this decisive step necessary, having learned from the gentlemen, most intimately acquainted with the character of the Canadian voyagers, that they invariably try how far they can impose upon every new master, and that they will continue to be disobedient and intractable if they once gain any ascendency over him. I must admit, however, that the present hardships of our companions were of a kind which few could support without murmuring, and

no one could witness without a sincere pity for their sufferings.

After this discussion we went forward until sunset. In the course of the day we crossed seven lakes and as many portages. Just as we had encamped we were delighted to see four of the hunters arrive with the flesh of two rein-deer. This seasonable supply, though only sufficient for this evening's and the next day's consumption, instantly revived the spirits of our companions, and they immediately forgot all their cares. As we did not, after this period, experience any deficiency of food during this journey, they worked extremely well, and never again reflected upon us as they had done before, for rashly bringing them into an inhospitable country, where the means of subsistence could not be procured.

Several blue fish, resembling the grayling, were caught in a stream which flows out of Hunter's Lake. It is remarkable for the largeness of the dorsal fin and the beauty of its colours.

*August* 14.—Having crossed the Hunter's Portage, we entered the Lake of the same name, in latitude 64° 6′ 47″ N., longitude 113° 25′ 00″ W; but soon quitted it by desire of the Indian guide, and diverged more to the eastward that we might get into the line upon which our hunters had gone. This was the only consideration that could have

induced us to remove to a chain of small lakes connected by long portages. We crossed three of these, and then were obliged to encamp to rest the men. The country is bare of wood except a few dwarf birch bushes, which grow near the borders of the lakes, and here and there a few stunted pines; and our fuel principally consisted of the roots of decayed pines, which we had some difficulty to collect in sufficient quantity for cooking. When this material is wanting, the reindeer lichen and other mosses that grow in profusion on the gravelly acclivities of the hills are used as substitutes. Three more of the hunters arrived with meat this evening, which supply came very opportunely as our nets were unproductive. At eight P.M.; a faint Aurora Borealis appeared to the southward, the night was cold, the wind strong from N.W.

We were detained some time in the following morning before the fishing-nets, which had sunk in the night, could be recovered.

After starting we first crossed the Orkney Lake, then a portage which brought us to Sandy Lake, and here we missed one of our barrels of powder, which the steersman of the canoe then recollected had been left the day before. He and two other men were sent back to search for it, in the small canoe. The rest of the party proceeded to the

portage on the north side of the Grizzle-Bear Lake, where the hunters had made a deposit of meat, and there encamped to await their return, which happened at nine P.M., with the powder. We perceived from the direction of this lake, that considerable labour would have been spared if we had continued our course yesterday instead of striking off at the guide's suggestion, as the bottom of this lake cannot be far separated from either Hunter's Lake or the one to the westward of it. The chief and all the Indians went off to hunt, accompanied by Pierre St. Germain, the interpreter. They returned at night, bringing some meat, and reported that they had put the carcases of several rein-deer *en cache*. These were sent for early next morning, and as the weather was unusually warm, the thermometer, at noon, being 77°, we remained stationary all day, that the women might prepare the meat for keeping, by stripping the flesh from the bones and drying it in the sun over a slow fire. The hunters were again successful, and by the evening we had collected the carcases of seventeen deer. As this was a sufficient store to serve us until we arrived at Winter Lake, the chief proposed that he and his hunters should proceed to that place and collect some provision against our arrival. He also requested that we would allow

him to be absent ten days to provide his family with clothing, as the skin of the rein-deer is unfit for that purpose after the month of September. We could not refuse to grant such a reasonable request, but caused St. Germain to accompany him, that his absence might not exceed the appointed time. Previous to his departure the chief warned us to be constantly on our guard against the grizzly bears, which he described as being numerous in this vicinity, and very ferocious; one had been seen this day by an Indian, to which circumstance the lake owes its appellation. We afterwards learned that the only bear in this part of the country is the brown bear, and that this by no means possesses the ferocity which the Indians, with their usual love of exaggeration, ascribe to it. The fierce grizzly bear, which frequents the sources of the Missouri, is not found on the barren grounds.

The shores of this lake and the neighbouring hills are principally composed of sand and gravel; they are much varied in their outline and present some picturesque scenery.

The following observations were taken here: latitude 64° 15′ 17″ N., longitude 113° 2′ 39″ W.; variation of the compass 36° 50′ 47″ E.; and dip of the needle 87° 20′ 35″.

On August the 17th, having finished drying the

meat, which had been retarded by the heavy showers of rain that fell in the morning, we embarked at one P.M. and crossed two lakes and two portages. The last of these was two thousand and sixty-six paces long, and very rugged, so that the men were much fatigued. On the next day we received the flesh of four rein-deer by the small canoe which had been sent for it, and heard that the hunters had killed several more deer on our route. We saw many of these animals as we passed along; and our companions, delighted with the prospect of having food in abundance, now began to accompany their paddling with singing, which they had discontinued ever since our provisions became scarce. We passed from one small lake to another over four portages, then crossed a lake about six miles in diameter, and encamped on its border, where, finding pines, we enjoyed the luxury of a good fire, which we had not done for some days. At ten P.M. the Aurora Borealis appeared very brilliant in an arch across the zenith, from north-west to south-east, which afterwards gave place to a beautiful corona borealis.

*August* 19.—After crossing a portage of five hundred and ninety-five paces, a small lake and another portage of two thousand paces, which occupied the crews seven hours, we embarked

on a small stream, running towards the north-west, which carried us to the lake, where Akaitcho proposed that we should pass the winter. The officers ascended several of the loftiest hills in the course of the day, prompted by a natural anxiety to examine the spot which was to be their residence for many months. The prospect, however, was not then the most agreeable, as the borders of the lake seemed to be scantily furnished with wood, and that of a kind too small for the purposes of building.

We perceived the smoke of a distant fire which the Indians suppose had been made by some of the Dog-ribbed tribe, who occasionally visit this part of the country.

Embarking at seven next morning, we paddled to the western extremity of the lake, and there found a small river, which flows out of it to the S.W. To avoid a strong rapid at its commencement, we made a portage, and then crossed to the north bank of the river, where the Indians recommended that the winter establishment should be erected, and we soon found that the situation they had chosen possessed all the advantages we could desire. The trees were numerous, and of a far greater size than we had supposed them to be in a distant view, some of the pines being thirty or forty feet high, and two feet in diameter at the root. We determined on

placing the house on the summit of the bank, which commands a beautiful prospect of the surrounding country. The view in the front is bounded at the distance of three miles, by round-backed hills; to the eastward and westward lie the Winter and Round-rock Lakes, which are connected by the Winter River, whose banks are well clothed with pines, and ornamented with a profusion of mosses, lichens, and shrubs.

In the afternoon we read divine service, and offered our thanksgiving to the Almighty for his goodness in having brought us thus far on our journey; a duty which we never neglected, when stationary on the sabbath.

The united length of the portages we had crossed, since leaving Fort Providence, is twenty-one statute miles and a half; and as our men had to traverse each portage four times, with a load of one hundred and eighty pounds, and return three times light, they walked in the whole upwards of one hundred and fifty miles. The total length of our voyage from Chipewyan is five hundred and fifty-three miles*.

| | Statute Miles. |
|---|---|
| * Stony and Slave Rivers | 260 |
| Slave Lake | 107 |
| Yellow-Knife River | 156.5 |
| Barren country between the source of the Yellow-Knife River and Fort Enterprise | 29.5 |
| | 553 |

A fire was made on the south side of the river to inform the chief of our arrival, which spreading before a strong wind, caught the whole wood, and we were completely enveloped in a cloud of smoke for the three following days.

On the next morning our voyagers were divided into two parties, the one to cut the wood for the building of a store-house, and the other to fetch the meat as the hunters procured it. An interpreter was sent with Keskarrah, the guide, tosearch for the Indians who had made the fire seen on Saturday, from whom we might obtain some supplies of provision. An Indian was also despatched to Akaitcho, with directions for him to come to this place directly, and bring whatever provision he had as we were desirous of proceeding, without delay, to the Copper-Mine River. In the evening our men brought in the carcases of seven rein-deer, which two hunters had shot yesterday, and the women commenced drying the meat for our journey. We also obtained a good supply of fish from our nets to-day.

A heavy rain, on the 23d, prevented the men from working, either at the building, or going for meat; but on the next day the weather was fine, and they renewed their labours. The thermometer, that day did not rise higher than 42°, and it fell to 31° before midnight. On the morn-

ing of the 25th, we were surprised by some early symptoms of the approach of winter; the small pools were frozen over, and a flock of geese passed to the southward. In the afternoon, however, a fog came on, which afterwards changed into rain, and the ice quickly disappeared. We suffered great anxiety all the next day respecting John Hepburn, who had gone to hunt before sunrise on the 25th, and had been absent ever since. About four hours after his departure the wind changed, and a dense fog obscured every mark by which his course to the tents could be directed, and we thought it probable he had been wandering in an opposite direction to our situation, as the two hunters, who had been sent to look for him, returned at sunset without having seen him. Akaitcho arrived with his party, and we were greatly disappointed at finding they had stored up only fifteen rein-deer for us. St. Germain informed us, that having heard of the death of the chief's brother-in-law, they had spent several days in bewailing his loss, instead of hunting. We learned also, that the decease of this man had caused another party of the tribe, who had been sent by Mr. Wentzel to prepare provision for us on the banks of the Copper-Mine River, to remove to the shores of the Great Bear Lake, distant from our proposed route. Mortifying as

these circumstances were, they produced less painful sensations than we experienced in the evening, by the refusal of Akaitcho to accompany us in the proposed descent of the Copper-Mine River. When Mr. Wentzel, by my direction, communicated to him my intention of proceeding at once on that service, he desired a conference with me upon the subject, which being immediately granted, he began, by stating, that the very attempt would be rash and dangerous, as the weather was cold, the leaves were falling, some geese had passed to the southward, and the winter would shortly set in; and that, as he considered the lives of all who went on such a journey would be forfeited, he neither would go himself, nor permit his hunters to accompany us. He said there was no wood within eleven days' march, during which time we could not have any fire, as the moss, which the Indians use in their summer excursions, would be too wet for burning, in consequence of the recent rains; that we should be forty days in descending the Copper-Mine River, six of which would be expended in getting to its banks, and that we might be blocked up by the ice in the next moon; and during the whole journey the party must experience great suffering for want of food, as the rein-deer had already left the river.

He was now reminded that these statements were very different from the account he had given, both at Fort Providence and on the route hither; and that, up to this moment, we had been encouraged by his conversation to expect that the party might descend the Copper-Mine River, accompanied by the Indians. He replied, that at the former place he had been unacquainted with our slow mode of travelling, and that the alteration in his opinion arose from the advance of winter.

We now informed him that we were provided with instruments by which we could ascertain the state of the air and water, and that we did not imagine the winter to be so near as he supposed; however, we promised to return on discovering the first change in the season. He was also told that all the baggage being left behind, our canoes, would now, of course, travel infinitely more expeditiously than any thing he had hitherto witnessed. Akaitcho appeared to feel hurt, that we should continue to press the matter further, and answered with some warmth: "Well, I have said every thing I can urge, to dissuade you from going on this service, on which, it seems, you wish to sacrifice your own lives, as well as the Indians who might attend you: however, if after all I have said, you are determined to go; some

of my young men shall join the party, because it shall not be said that we permitted you to die alone after having brought you hither; but from the moment they embark in the canoes, I and my relatives shall lament them as dead."

We could only reply to this forcible appeal, by assuring him and the Indians who were seated around him, that we felt the most anxious solicitude for the safety of every individual, and that it was far from our intention to proceed without considering every argument for and against the proposed journey.

We next informed him, that it would be very desirable to see the river at any rate, that we might give some positive information about its situation and size, in our next letters to the Great Chief; and that we were very anxious to get on its banks, for the purpose of observing an eclipse of the sun, which we described to him, and said would happen in a few days. He received this communication with more temper than the preceding, though he immediately assigned as a reason for his declining to go, that "the Indians must now procure a sufficient quantity of deer-skins for winter clothing for themselves, and dresses for the Canadians, who would need them if they had to travel in the winter." Finding him so averse to proceed, and feeling at the same

time, how essential his continuance with us was, not only to our future success, but even to our existence during the winter, I closed the conversation here, intending to propose to him next morning, some modification of the plan, which might meet his approbation. Soon after we were gone, however, he informed Mr. Wentzel, with whom he was in the habit of speaking confidentially, that as his advice was neglected, his presence was useless, and he should, therefore, return to Fort Providence with his hunters, after he had collected some winter provision for us. Mr. Wentzel having reported this to me, the night was passed in great anxiety, and after weighing all the arguments that presented themselves to my mind, I came reluctantly to the determination of relinquishing the intention of going any distance down the river this season. I had considered, that could we ascertain what were the impediments to the navigation of the Copper-Mine-River, what wood grew on its banks, if fit for boat building, and whether drift timber existed where the country was naked, our operations next season would be much facilitated; but we had also cherished the hope of reaching the sea this year, for the Indians in their conversations with us, had only spoken of two great rapids as likely to obstruct us. This was a hope extremely painful to give up; for,

in the event of success, we should have ascertained whether the sea was clear of ice, and navigable for canoes; have learned the disposition of the Esquimaux; and might have obtained other information that would have had great influence on our future proceedings.

I must confess, however, that my opinion of the probability of our being able to attain so great a desideratum this season had been somewhat altered by the recent changes in the weather, although, had the chief been willing to accompany us with his party, I should have made the attempt; with the intention, however, of returning immediately upon the first decided appearance of winter.

On the morning of August 27th, having communicated my sentiments to the officers, on the subject of the conference last evening, they all agreed that the descent to the sea this season could not be attempted, without hazarding a complete rupture with the Indians; but they thought that a party should be sent to ascertain the distance and size of the Copper-Mine River. These opinions being in conformity with my own, I determined on despatching Messrs. Back and Hood on that service, in a light canoe, as soon as possible.

We witnessed this morning an instance of the

versatility of our Indian companions, which gave us much uneasiness, as it regarded the safety of our faithful attendant Hepburn. When they heard, on their arrival last night, of his having been so long absent, they expressed the greatest solicitude about him, and the whole party immediately volunteered to go in search of him as soon as daylight permitted. Their resolutions, however, seem to have been changed, in consequence of the subsequent conversation we had with the chief, and we found all of them indisposed to proceed on that errand this morning; and it was only by much entreaty, that three of the hunters and a boy were prevailed upon to go. They fortunately succeeded in their search, and we were infinitely rejoiced to see Hepburn return with them in the afternoon, though much jaded by the fatigue he had undergone. He had got bewildered, as we had conjectured, in the foggy weather on the 25th, and had been wandering about ever since, except during half an hour that he slept yesterday. He had eaten only a partridge and some berries, for his anxiety of mind had deprived him of appetite; and of a deer which he had shot, he took only the tongue, and the skin to protect himself from the wind and rain. This anxiety, we learned from him, was occasioned by the fear that the party which was about to de-

scend the Copper-Mine River, might be detained until he was found, or that it might have departed without him. He did not entertain any dread of the white bears, of whose numbers and ferocious attacks the Indians had been constantly speaking, since we had entered the barren grounds. Our fears for his safety, however, were in a considerable degree excited by the accounts we had received of these animals. Having made a hearty supper he retired to rest, slept soundly, and arose next morning in perfect health.

On the 28th of August Akaitcho was informed of our intention to send a party to the river, and of the reasons for doing so, of which he approved, when he found that I had relinquished the idea of going myself, in compliance with the desire which he and the Indians had expressed; and he immediately said two of the hunters should go to provide them with food on the journey, and to serve as guides. During this conversation we gathered from him, for the first time, that there might still be some of his tribe near to the river, from whom the party could get provision. Our next object was to despatch the Indians to their hunting-ground to collect provision for us, and to procure the fat of the deer for our use during the winter, and for making the pemmican we should

require in the spring. They were therefore furnished with some ammunition, clothing, and other necessary articles, and directed to take their departure as soon as possible.

Akaitcho came into our tent this evening at supper, and made several pertinent inquiries respecting the eclipse, of which we had spoken last night. He desired to know the effect that would be produced, and the cause of it, which we endeavoured to explain; and having gained this information, he sent for several of his companions, that they might also have it repeated to them. They were most astonished at our knowing the time at which this event should happen, and remarked that this knowledge was a striking proof of the superiority of the whites over the Indians. We took advantage of this occasion to speak to them respecting the Supreme Being, who ordered all the operations of nature, and to impress on their minds the necessity of paying strict attention to their moral duties, in obedience to his will. They readily assented to all these points, and Akaitcho assured us that both himself and his young men would exert themselves in obtaining provision for us, in return for the interesting communications we had just made to them.

Having received a supply of dried meat from the Indian lodges, we were enabled to equip the

party for the Copper-Mine River, and at nine A.M., on the 29th, Mr. Back and Mr. Hood embarked on that service in a light canoe, with St. Germain, eight Canadians and one Indian. We could not furnish them with more than eight days' provision, which, with their blankets, two tents, and a few instruments, composed their lading. Mr. Back, who had charge of the party, was directed to proceed to the river, and if, when he arrived at its banks, the weather should continue to be mild, and the temperature of the water was not lower than 40°, he might embark, and descend the stream for a few days to gain some knowledge of its course, but he was not to go so far as to risk his being able to return to this place in a fortnight with the canoe. But, if the weather should be severe, and the temperature of the water below 40°, he was not to embark, but return immediately, and endeavour to ascertain the best track for our goods to be conveyed thither next spring.

We had seen that the water decreases rapidly in temperature at this season, and I feared that, if he embarked to descend the river when it was below 40°, the canoe might be frozen in, and the crew have to walk back in very severe weather.

As soon as the canoes had started, Akaitcho and the Indians took their departure also, except two of the hunters, who staid behind to kill deer

in our neighbourhood, and old Keskarrah and his family, who remained as our guests.

The fishing-nets were this day transferred from the river in which they had been set since our arrival, to Winter Lake, whither the fish had removed, and the fishermen built a log-hut on its borders to reside in, that they might attend more closely to their occupation.

The month of September commenced with very disagreeable weather. The temperature of the atmosphere ranged between 39° and 31° during the first three days, and that of the water in the river decreased from 49° to 44°. Several reindeer and a large flight of white geese passed to the southward. These circumstances led us to fear for the comfort, if not for the safety, of our absent friends. On the 4th of September we commenced building our dwelling-house, having cut sufficient wood for the frame of it.

In the afternoon of September the 6th, we removed our tent to the summit of a hill, about three miles distant, for the better observing the eclipse, which was calculated to occur on the next morning. We were prevented, however, from witnessing it by a heavy snow-storm, and the only observation we could then make was to examine whether the temperature of the atmosphere altered during the eclipse, but we found that both the

mercurial and spirit thermometers remained steadily at 30° for a quarter of an hour previous to its commencement, during its continuance, and for half an hour subsequent to its termination; we remarked the wind increased very much, and the snow fell in heavier flakes just after the estimated time of its commencement. This boisterous weather continued until three P.M., when the wind abated, and the snow changed to rain.

As there was now no immediate occasion for my remaining on the spot, the eclipse being over, and the Indians having removed to their hunting-grounds, Dr. Richardson and I determined on taking a pedestrian excursion to the Copper-Mine River, leaving Mr. Wentzel in charge of the men, and to superintend the buildings. On the morning of September the 9th we commenced our journey, under the guidance of old Keskarrah, and accompanied by John Hepburn and Samandré, who carried our blankets, cooking utensils, hatchets, and a small supply of dried meat. Our guide led us from the top of one hill to the top of another, making as straight a course to the northward as the numerous lakes, with which the country is intersected, would permit. At noon we reached a remarkable hill, with precipitous sides, named by the Copper Indians the Dog-rib Rock, and its latitude, 64° 34′ .52″ S., was ob-

tained. The canoe-track passes to the eastward of this rock, but we kept to the westward, as being the more direct course. From the time we quitted the banks of Winter River we saw only a few detached clumps of trees; but after we passed Dog-rib Rock even these disappeared, and we travelled through a naked country. In the course of the afternoon Keskarrah killed a rein-deer, and loaded himself with its head and skin, and our men also carried off a few pounds of its flesh for supper; but their loads were altogether too great to permit them to take much additional weight. Keskarrah offered to us as a great treat the raw marrow from the hind legs of the animal, of which all the party ate except myself, and thought it very good. I was also of the same opinion, when I subsequently conquered my then too fastidious taste. We halted for the night on the borders of a small lake, which washed the base of a ridge of sand-hills, about three hundred feet high, having walked in direct distance sixteen miles.

There were four ancient pine-trees here which did not exceed six or seven feet in height, but whose branches spread themselves out for several yards, and we gladly cropped a few twigs to make a bed and to protect us from the frozen ground, still white from a fall of snow which took place in the afternoon. We were about to cut down

one of these trees for firewood, but our guide solicited us to spare them, and made us understand by signs that they had been long serviceable to his nation, and that we ought to content ourselves with a few of the smaller branches. As soon as we comprehended his request we complied with it, and our attendants having, with some trouble, grubbed up a sufficient quantity of the roots of the dwarf birch to make a fire, we were enabled to prepare a comfortable supper of rein-deer's meat, which we despatched with the appetites which travelling in this country never fails to ensure. We then stretched ourselves out on the pine brush, and covered by a single blanket, enjoyed a night of sound repose. The small quantity of bed-clothes we carried induced us to sleep without undressing. Old Keskarrah followed a different plan; he stripped himself to the skin, and having toasted his body for a short time over the embers of the fire, he crept under his deer-skin and rags, previously spread out as smoothly as possible, and coiling himself up in a circular form, fell asleep instantly. This custom of undressing to the skin even when lying in the open air is common to all the Indian tribes. The thermometer at sunset stood at 29°.

Resuming our journey next morning we pursued a northerly course, but had to make a con-

siderable circuit round the western ends of two lakes whose eastern extremities were hidden from our view. The march was very uncomfortable as the wind was cold, and there was a constant fall of snow until noon; our guide too persisted in taking us over the summit of every hill that lay in the route, so that we had the full benefit of the breeze.

We forded two streams in the afternoon flowing between small lakes, and being wet, did not much relish having to halt, whilst Keskarrah pursued a herd of rein-deer; but there was no alternative, as he set off and followed them without consulting our wishes. The old man loaded himself with the skin, and some meat of the animal he killed, in addition to his former burden; but after walking two miles, finding his charge too heavy for his strength, he spread the skin on the rock, and deposited the meat under some stones, intending to pick them up on our return.

We put up at sunset on the borders of a large lake, having come twelve miles. A few dwarf birches afforded us but a scanty fire, yet being sheltered from the wind by a sandy bank, we passed the night comfortably, though the temperature was 30°. A number of geese passed over us to the southward. We set off early next morning, and marched at a tolerably quick pace,

The atmosphere was quite foggy, and our view was limited to a short distance. At noon, the sun shone forth for a few minutes, and the latitude 64° 57′ 7″ was observed. The small streams that we had hitherto crossed run uniformly to the southward.

At the end of sixteen miles and a half we encamped amongst a few dwarf pines, and were much rejoiced at having a good fire, as the night was very stormy and cold. The thermometer fluctuated this day between 31° and 35°. Though the following morning was foggy and rainy, we were not sorry to quit the cold and uncomfortable beds of rock upon which we had slept, and commence our journey at an early hour. After walking about three miles, we passed over a steep sandy ridge, and found the course of the rivulets running towards the north and north-west. Our progress was slow in the early part of the morning, and we were detained for two hours on the summit of a hill exposed to a very cold wind, whilst our guide went in an unsuccessful pursuit of some rein-deer. After walking a few miles farther, the fog cleared away, and Keskarrah pointed out the Copper-Mine River at a distance, and we pushed towards it with all the speed we could put forth. At noon we arrived at an arm

of Point Lake, an extensive expansion of the river, and observed the latitude 65° 9′ 06″ N. We continued our walk along the south end of this arm for about a mile further, and then halted to breakfast amidst a cluster of pines. Here the longitude, 112° 57′ 25″, was observed. After breakfast we set out and walked along the east-side of the arm towards the main body of the lake, leaving Samandré to prepare an encampment amongst the pines against our return. We found the main channel deep, its banks high and rocky, and the valleys on its borders interspersed with clusters of spruce-trees. The latter circumstance was a source of much gratification to us. The temperature of its surface water was 41°, that of the air being 43°. Having gained all the information we could collect from our guide and from personal observation, we retraced our steps to the encampment; and on the way back Hepburn and Keskarrah shot several waveys *(anas hyperborea)* which afforded us a seasonable supply, our stock of provision being nearly exhausted. These birds were feeding in large flocks on the crow-berries, which grew plentifully on the sides of the hills. We reached the encampment after dark, found a comfortable hut prepared for our reception, made an excellent

supper, and slept soundly though it snowed hard the whole night.

The hills in this neighbourhood are higher than those about Fort Enterprise; they stand, however, in the same detached manner, without forming connected ranges; and the bottom of every valley is occupied, either by a small lake or a stony marsh. On the borders of such of these lakes as communicate with the Copper-Mine River, there are a few groves of spruce-trees, generally growing on accumulations of sand, on the acclivities of the hills.

We did not quit the encampment on the morning of September 13th until nine o'clock, in consequence of a constant fall of snow; but at that hour we set out on our return to Fort Enterprise, and taking a route somewhat different from the one by which we came, kept to the eastward of a chain of lakes. Soon after noon the weather became extremely disagreeable; a cold northerly gale came on, attended by snow and sleet; and the temperature fell very soon from 43° to 34°. The waveys, alarmed at the sudden change, flew over our heads in great numbers to a milder climate. We walked as quickly as possible to get to a place that would furnish some fuel and shelter; but the fog occasioned us to make frequent halts, from the inability of our guide to

trace his way. At length we came to a spot which afforded us plenty of dwarf birches, but they were so much frozen, and the snow fell so thick, that upwards of two hours were wasted in endeavouring to make a fire; during which time our clothes were freezing upon us. At length our efforts were crowned with success, and after a good supper, we laid, or rather sat down to sleep; for the nature of the ground obliged us to pass the night in a demi-erect position, with our backs against a bank of earth. The thermometer was 16° at six P.M.

After enjoying a more comfortable night's rest than we had expected, we set off at day-break: the thermometer then standing at 18°. The ground was covered with snow, the small lakes were frozen, and the whole scene had a wintry appearance. We got on but slowly at first, owing to an old sprained ancle, which had been very troublesome to me for the last three days, and was this morning excessively painful. In fording a rivulet, however, the application of cold water gave me immediate relief, and I walked with ease the remainder of the day. In the afternoon we rejoined our track outwards and came to the place where Keskarrah had made his deposit of provision, which proved a very acceptable supply, as our stock was exhausted. We then crossed

some sand hills, and encamped amidst a few small pines, having walked thirteen miles.

The comfort of a good fire made us soon insensible to the fatigue we had experienced through the day, in marching over the rugged stones, whose surface was rendered slippery by the frost. The thermometer at seven P.M. stood at 27°.

We set off at sunrise next morning, and our provision being expended pushed on as fast as we could to Fort Enterprise, where we arrived at eight P.M., almost exhausted by a harassing day's march of twenty-two miles. A substantial supper of rein-deer steaks soon restored our vigour. We had the happiness of meeting our friends Mr. Back and Mr. Hood, who had returned from their excursion on the day succeeding that on which we set out; and I received from them the following account of their journey.

They proceeded up the Winter River to the north end of the Little Marten Lake, and then the guide, being unacquainted with the route by water to the Copper-Mine River, proposed that the canoe should be left. Upon this they ascended the loftiest hill in the neighbourhood, to examine whether they could discover any large lakes, or water communication in the direction where the guide described the river to be. They

only saw a small rivulet, which was too shallow for the canoe, and also wide of the course; and as they perceived the crew would have to carry it over a rugged hilly track, they judiciously decided on leaving it, and proceeding forward on foot. Having deposited the canoe among a few dwarf birch bushes, they commenced their march, carrying their tents, blankets, cooking utensils, and a part of the dried meat. St. Germain, however, had previously delineated with charcoal, a man and a house on a piece of bark, which he placed over the canoe and the few things that were left, to point out to the Dog-Ribs that they belonged to white people.

The party reached the shores of Point Lake, through which the Copper-Mine River runs, on the 1st of September. The next day was too stormy for them to march, but on the 3d, they proceeded along its shores to the westward, round a mountainous promontory, and perceiving the course of the lake extending to the W.N.W., they encamped near some pines, and then enjoyed the luxury of a good fire, for the first time since their departure from us. The temperature of the water in the lake was 35°, and of the air 32°, but the latter fell to 20° in the course of that night. As their principal object was to ascertain whether any arm of the lake branched nearer to Fort

Enterprise than the part they had fallen upon, to which the transport of our goods could be more easily made next spring, they returned on its borders to the eastward, being satisfied, by the appearance of the mountains between south and west, that no further examination was necessary in that direction; and they continued their march until the 6th at noon, without finding any part of the lake inclining nearer the fort. They therefore encamped to observe the eclipse, which was to take place on the following morning; but a violent snow storm rendering the observation impossible, they commenced their return, and after a comfortless and laborious march regained their canoe on the 10th, and embarking in it, arrived the same evening at the house.

Point Lake varied, as far as they traced, from one to three miles in width. Its main course was nearly east and west, but several arms branched off in different directions. I was much pleased with the able manner in which these officers executed the service they had been despatched upon, and was gratified to learn from them, that their companions had conducted themselves extremely well, and borne the fatigues of their journey most cheerfully. They scarcely ever had more than sufficient fuel to boil the kettle; and were generally obliged to lie down in their wet

clothes, and consequently, suffered much from cold.

The distance which the parties travelled, in their journey to and from Point Lake, may be estimated at one hundred and ten statute miles, which being added to the distances given in the preceding pages, amount to one thousand five hundred and twenty miles that the Expedition travelled in 1820, up to the time of its residence at Fort Enterprise.

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Government of Maharashtra
on 02 April, 2016